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FAIR, BUT NOT WISE.

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FAIR, BUT NOT WISE.

A. Nobel.

BY

MRS. FORREST - GRANT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.



LONDON :
SAMUEL TINSLEY, 10, SOUTHAMPTON ST., STRAND.
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P R E F A C E.

To parents, relatives, and friends of every denomination in India, sending young girls to England for home education and back to that far-off land, are these pages dedicated, with the earnest hope that the lessons and warnings they are intended to convey might not be lost upon them, for, exaggerated though many of the descriptions will no doubt seem, they, in fact, stand considerably within the truth.

To the clergy also is the work inscribed. Mr. Campbell is no fictitious character : let them, therefore, strive to imitate his noble example—yet more, far more, the example of their Divine Master of old—and “Go, and do likewise.”

FAIR, BUT NOT WISE.

CHAPTER I.

Yes, waft me from the harbour mouth,
Wild winds ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palace and temples of the South.

A chield's amang ye takin' notes,
And, faith ! she 'll prent 'em.

I WAS seventeen years of age when condemned (for I bitterly felt it a condemnation !) by friends and doctors to make a voyage by sea to India and back for my health. Under the trustworthy care, therefore, of my loving little maid, Jenny, who had tended me since babyhood, off I set in the great East India-man, "Bird of Passage," for Calcutta.

Oh ! how helplessly miserable are the first

VOL. I.

B

days and nights on board a vessel to those who, like my unlucky self, are instantly seized upon, tormented, and tortured by that remorseless foe, sea-sickness! How earnestly one longs to be allowed to decide for oneself what is best to do, or not to do, under the distressing circumstances! As for me, I resolved to lie still and die—only hoping that death was not far distant; and which, considering my past ill health and present suffering, it in all probability would not have been, had I followed my own inclination. This I mournfully bewailed I was never permitted to do; and now down came the doctor and Jenny upon me, imperatively demanding, indeed almost forcing submission to two things, which, just then, seemed the most impossible in the world—first, to eat and drink; and, secondly, to leave my couch, come on deck, and walk about. With a feeling of reckless indifference as to consequences, I obeyed orders, and forced down a little meat, seasoned and heated to the highest pitch of human endurance, and drank a glass of port wine.

“ Well, that will finish me, if nothing else has,” thought I; but, wonderful to say, from that hour I began to mend; and, following up the advantage, I was enabled, in two or three days, to put in practice the second medical injunction, and rise and attend the cuddy breakfast. What an undertaking that first morning’s dressing was!—never shall I forget it!

Poor little Jenny, who, as well as myself, had been a painful sufferer from sea-sickness, but whose anxiety for her charge and previous good health had enabled her to battle against it, was nevertheless much reduced in strength, and found it no easy matter to contend with the erratic movements of the “Bird of Passage,” which was in a provokingly frolicsome mood on this particular morning. As for my own attempts, they proved, from the moment I first set foot on the floor, of the most humiliating kind. Aiming at one part of the cabin, I found myself rushing headlong at another; Jenny, meanwhile, in her efforts to help me, being suddenly pitched in an opposite direction, and obliged to cling to a

chest of drawers or table, begging me earnestly to bide still a bit, till she could come to me, just as if I was capering about in this mad fashion for my own wilful delectation. The next movement of the vessel, however, sent me ignominiously tumbling back again upon my couch, and deposited Jenny on the floor, where she sat and gazed up at me in such blank despair, silently responded to in like manner by myself, that finally we both burst into a fit of merriment, and nearly laughed ourselves into hysterics.

By dint of unflinching perseverance, however, the work of preparation was sufficiently effected for the first morning's exhibition; and, supported by Jenny's arm to the entrance of the cuddy, we staggered and tumbled along together in a manner at once ludicrous and ungraceful to the last degree. Here I left my little woman, and, supporting myself as best I could by every available object, was finally deposited, all in a hurry, on the chair pointed out as mine by one of the cuddy servants, and on the back of which my name was affixed.

And now, settled for awhile in a place of safety, and having, in a few minutes, recovered from my agitation, I began to amuse myself by taking note of all that was passing around me, and particularly of the different persons—my fellow-passengers—coming in to breakfast.

I am afraid it is only too true that in every human breast there lurks an unchristian feeling of satisfaction—a pleasant sensation—of being in some degree compensated for one's mortifications or disappointments—one's loss, in any way, of the valued tail—in discovering the equally unlucky condition of others. It was, therefore, an amused comforting glow of encouragement which brightened my heart when I saw that not even the more experienced made their appearance on the scene in one bit better fashion than myself, but were, in like manner, evidently engrossed by a dread of being thrown on the floor, or even pitched on to the top of the table. When securely seated, however, the majority stared about them, as I was doing, with obvious

feelings of self-congratulation, and only too great a readiness to fully appreciate the discomfiture of their neighbours, after their own.

The experience of that first breakfast convinced me, as had my first attempt at eating, that I had done well in making the effort, painfully distressing though it was, to rise and come into the cuddy. The distraction of thought consequent upon such change of scene—its bustle, confusion, and strange novelty—the little lively conversation with one's right and left hand neighbours—everything, in fact, causing forgetfulness of woes and self, soon created a cheerfulness that invigorated and restored my appetite, enabling me to eat with a certain amount of relish some hot curry and rice, and drink a cup of coffee. And before concluding this chapter, I would say to all who may suffer as I then did—concede nothing to the cruel sea-tyrant ; rise, no matter how much against the inclination, early in the day ; obtain a cup of hot tea before dressing ; leave your cabin as soon as possible ; walk up and down

the deck ; laugh, talk, eat, and drink, and in every way make light of your troubles; act on all points in total opposition to that voice of nature which, as regards health, you have hitherto been taught to respect.

CHAPTER II.

The dinner made about a hundred dishes ;
Lamb, mutton, veal—in short, all meats,
And soups, and sweetbreads ; and the fishes
Were of the finest e'er flounced in nets,
Dressed to a Sybarite's most pampered wishes ;
The beverage was various and excellent.

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their rôle,
And various as the various meats displayed.—BYRON.

It may, perhaps, be interesting to those who have not made a voyage in one of these well-appointed East Indiamen, to be informed in what style the culinary arrangements are carried on. They were nearly as rich, certainly as excellent, varied, and plentiful, as those which are to be met with at the best tables-d'hôte in England, or even in the largest country houses. An elegance of

method, or a correct mixture of dishes, was certainly not much studied, nor did any one seem to expect or care about such refinements at sea—indeed, it could not be, no matter how much desired. But never had I seen such a heterogeneous mass of eatables as at that memorable breakfast! And each morning it was equally abundant, but with, of course, a constant varying of dishes. The dinners, too, were capital—profuse in quantity, and excellently cooked; a professed man cook being always engaged for the voyage. An ample allowance of fresh milk was to be had each day, and bread of several kinds, fancy and plain, was baked every morning.

And, oh! how some of the passengers seemed to enjoy all the good things—fish, flesh, and fowl—and confection, and preserved fruits of endless varieties: many of them, too, looking so sick and mournful the while, as though performing a painful penance there was no choice but to get through as fast and as best they could!

Opposite to me sat a young girl whose

exploits in that way—I mean in eating—were so marvellous, that I could scarcely keep my astonished eyes from continually watching her. I really grew quite ashamed of myself. Not that my observation seemed to cause her the slightest feeling of discomfiture, or to hinder her from the full gratification of her enjoyment. Personal appearances certainly did credit to her self-liberality, for she was large, fat, and fair; but the general expression of her features was, in my opinion, very unpleasing. Once our eyes met, and in hers there gleamed an undisguised look of contempt and dislike, which after-acquaintance daily increased rather than lessened. Nor, I must confess, was I backward in returning these unamiable feelings, for never before or since have I known any one so repellent to my nature as were that girl's manner and character. But, not to anticipate.

CHAPTER III.

Oh ! let us not sink beneath our woe ;
'Tis well perchance we are tried and bowed ;
For be sure, though you may not see it below,
There 's a silver lining to every cloud.

A sweet attractive kind of grace ;
A full assurance given by looks ;
Continual comfort in a face ;
The lineaments of Gospel books—
I trow that countenance cannot lie
Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.—SYDNEY.

TIME passed on, bearing away on its wings many of my grievances, for as my health strengthened and improved—which, thank God, it did wonderfully—my feelings flowed into a smoother, brighter channel, allowing my before sad and prejudiced eyes to discern the “silver lining” to those very clouds I had thought so impenetrably dark.

Among a large number of passengers there must, of course, be a great variety of character, some good, some evil, and others steering pretty evenly betwixt the two.

I suppose there is no place in the world where civilized human beings walk about more, morally, unveiled than on board ship during a long voyage. It is, as it were, a great chemical tester of the pure and the dross in the hearts and souls of men ; and while some come out all the brighter and more beautiful from the refiner's fire, others, again, display but an increase of blackness and ugliness.

With many on board I became, by degrees, very intimate, and their friendship proved a source of much pleasure and comfort to me. In one case in particular my acquaintance ripened at once into a warm love, and gratitude, on my side, which will cling to me through life. It was that of a married lady, a Mrs. Graham, and the occupier of a cabin adjoining my own. She was young—certainly not more than three or four and twenty ; and, though not remarkably handsome, yet possessed of a face and figure so extremely graceful and attractive, that more than compensated for the want of regular beauty. Her manners and conversation, too,

were winning in a high degree; but that which especially interested me in her was a certain fixed melancholy, inlaying all she said, and looked, and did, and filling with sadness her sweet, kind voice, and soft blue eyes. No passing event, even for the moment, seemed to move aside the bitter memory, whatever it was, or to lighten her despondency. Often, when unobserved, I marked that when laughter and merriment were going on around us, although her pleasant voice quietly joined with others, the cloud still rested on her brow; and the woeful look in her eyes reminded me of Moore's beautiful lines—

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes;
To which life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy has no balm, and affliction no sting.

Oh! this thought in the midst of enjoyment will stay
Like a dead leafless branch in the summer's bright ray;
The beams of the warm sun play round it in vain,
It may smile in his light, but it blooms not again.

I longed to know what the sorrow could be that had power to thus hold her bound with so unrelenting a grasp. But when first I

made these observations, we were not on speaking terms, though wishing to be so, won by the looks of pity and sympathy I frequently detected her fixing on my pale sickly face—our seats at the cuddy-table being nearly opposite to each other. The friendship between us commenced in this wise.

I was one day more than usually ill and miserable—this was soon after the vessel left England: the whole previous night had been again spent in coughing, sickness, and wakefulness; and in the morning, while still lying in bed, weary to the last degree, I heard a soft tap at the door, and the next instant Mrs. Graham's gentle face was bending over me.

She "had missed me at breakfast," she said; and fearing illness was the cause of my absence, had questioned my maid, and learned I had been much disturbed all night by the roughness of the weather; "and knowing, my poor child," she continued, with increasing tenderness, "you have no relations on board, I set ceremony aside, and have come to see if I can in any way supply their place in comforting and cheering you."

I was just then feeling desperately sorry for myself, and Mrs. Graham's commiserating eyes and words made me yet more so ; they seemed, I thought, to completely confirm the justice of that self-pitying discontent, the indulging in which had drawn upon me a good scolding from the energetic little Jenny. Determinedly restraining my tears, however, I thanked her warmly for coming, declaring that the very sight of her kind face had already done me good, and I hoped she would charitably visit me often.

" Oh, often ! Nothing could at present give me more pleasure, dear," she said, " than assisting your servant in the care of you until you are stronger. To-day, especially, as she was unavoidably kept up so much last night, would you not like her to go to her cabin and try and sleep for two or three hours, while I remain with you ?"

" Oh, yes !" I rejoined ; " I should be so glad ! Poor Jenny ! I know she is sadly tired ; but nothing will make her acknowledge it so long as she is able to bear up, if I in any way need her care."

"Well, she may safely trust me, for I have served a long apprenticeship to illness," replied Mrs. Graham, smiling sadly; "so I will just go and look for Miss Jenny, and send her off to bed, then bring my work and books."

Thus it was this kind and gentle Christian lady cast those seeds of friendship into my grateful heart which from that day and hour struck root, and grew, and strengthened, and enlarged into a wide-spreading tree, producing, I trust for both of us, certainly for myself, an abundance of pleasant flowers and fruit.

Mrs. Graham was still sitting with me when the half-past two o'clock dressing-bell for dinner summoned her away. I had greatly enjoyed her society; never before had I met any one so irresistibly fascinating in manner and conversation. She was one of those bewitching women who, when choosing to exercise their power upon men, could prove the most dangerous of rivals to the most beautiful face! But how impossible it is to explain in *what* "fascination" really con-

sists—to define the bewitching something that lurks within every glance, and smile, and word. I cannot do so—all I know is, I felt charmed by her spells, as though she were the veriest witch left unburned. And so totally devoid was she of all affectation the while—as unconscious, seemingly, of her unrivalled attractiveness as is the bright stream of the inlaying gems sparkling through its rippling waters.

But, in my opinion, her paramount charm was that tender sympathy with the woes and weaknesses of others, and self-sacrificing endeavours to remove or alleviate them, which throughout our intimate acquaintance I saw characterized her conduct on every occasion that offered. Yes, though possessed of natural and acquired graces which could render her attractive to the most refined society, it seemed equally her beautiful mission on earth to hover round a sick bed, and with soft hand and voice soothe the aching head or pour balm on the troubled heart. God bless her! dear, sweet, loving, lovable Mary Graham!

CHAPTER IV.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in her strength ;
She shuddered, and paused like a frightened steed,
Then leaped the wild wave's length.

LONGFELLOW.

Come, gentle dreams, the hour of pain beguile.
Oh ! when shall they for whom I sigh in vain
Beside me watch to see my waking smile ?

SEVERAL times again during that day Mrs. Graham came in to see me and have a little lively chat; and so exceedingly did these short visitations improve my mental and physical condition, that by the evening I felt well enough to wish Jenny to leave me for the night, and, in her own bed, obtain a good long rest. Unfortunately her cabin was on the lower deck; there had been no help for it, the number of gentlemen and lady passen-

gers making it unavoidable ; and it was not deemed advisable for my health, the space being so confined, that any one should share a cabin with me.

Jenny rose up warmly against my proposal. "Leave me to-night, when I had been so ill all the night before ? How could I think of such a thing ? I might be just as bad again, and she sleeping away and knowing nothing about it !"

"That is not likely, nursey," I urged ; "I am better to-day than I was yesterday ; and, believe me, the seeing you—poor tired little woman!—sitting on that chair, wide awake, and watching me, will as effectually drive away my chance of sleep as coughing did last night. And even if we both slumber soundly, despite all, why that might be worse still," I continued, with affected seriousness. "One can feel that the 'Bird of Passage' is unmistakably in a very frisky, wicked humour this evening ; and just fancy when you and I are wandering in dreamland, her suddenly and maliciously conceiving the notion to pitch you over my head ! You are not a

very tall or large woman certainly, but you are quite substantial enough to flatten my brains and make an idiot of me; and wouldn't that be a nice reflection for you the rest of your life!"

Jenny was totally devoid of all perception of the ludicrous; she could never understand a joke; and now, in her straightforward, matter-of-fact way, received my words quite literally, saying, with a perplexed, half-frightened stare,—

"La, Miss Kitty! why should I do that just to-night in partic'lar, when I haven't done it all along before? and many a time you and me were both asleep at once."

"I don't know," I said; "besides that doesn't go for anything. Don't you remember, nursey, the pitcher went whole ninety-nine times to the well and was broken on the hundredth? If we did sleep at the same time, we ought not to have been so dangerously reckless; but I have no recollection of our doing anything of the kind; on the contrary, I am sure one or other was always on the watch for contingencies. Anyhow you won't

stay up here to-night, nursey," I concluded, determinately ; "for if you venture to set yourself out there on that chair with the intention of remaining in it for the night, I'll amuse myself making a pillory case of you, and pelt everything I can lay my hands on at your head."

Jenny knew from experience that when my fun was up, I was quite equal to my threats ; and again, implicitly believing me, replied with a hopeless sigh,—

"Ah, well ! I suppose it must be as you choose, you spoilt child. One comfort, it's not long you will be alone, for I'll come up with the first glimmer of daylight, which will be about three o'clock, I take it."

Soon after Jenny left me I fell asleep, but at midnight was suddenly awaked by the fierce howling of the wind and violent plunges of the vessel. We were not yet beyond the dangerous influence of Channel storms, and the weather during the past two days had been so rough and threatening, the captain had more than once deemed it prudent to lay-to at night and wait for morning. But

we were not doing so at present; I knew that, for the "Bird of Passage" was careering over the heaving waters like a mad thing. It was a fearful night, and each minute seemed to bring increased strength to the wild blast, as it came sweeping over the ocean from the far distance, with first a low rushing sound, then ending in a savage roar and shriek and dash against our frail bark. Oh, how frail! opposed to such might!

Once, I was certain—I am certain now I made no mistake, the sensation was so decided, so awfully palpable—that the vessel was raised by the hurricane some three or four feet, perhaps more, out of the water, and hurled down again. I heard every officer and man on watch, and every unfastened thing tumbling about the decks, and the former struggling to recover their footing; while, the next instant, the captain and the principal officer, who had retired to their cabins to snatch a few hours' rest, rushed in anxious haste to join the wild scene above. Oh, how miserable I was lying there, confined in that small space, listening and

imagining all sorts of horrors ! How often I bitterly and selfishly regretted having sent away dear, courageous, philosophical little Jenny, who was afraid of nothing ; or if she was, never betrayed it in her anxiety, no matter how great the danger, to encourage or save any one she loved. It had been my lot to experience the self-sacrificing devotion of the excellent little creature—an experience not to be rivalled, and rarely equalled. She had rushed through a burning house, at the risk of her life, to the room where I, a child of four years old, lay in my cot sleeping. She could not return with me the way she had come, she knew she could not, but preferred death with her nursling, if unable to save me. By her frantic cries and exertions we were saved, however ; a ladder was raised to the window, and, clutching her precious burden in her faithful arms, she conveyed me down in safety.

So, you see, I well knew the strength of the heart and arm I had ever since trusted ; and no wonder I longed just then to hear and see her cheery voice and face.

Tumbling, tossing, bemoaning, and trembling, I soon became feverish, and that quickly brought on my cough; and now I was as wretched as I deserved to be, for my weakness and folly in not trusting more to that Almighty power which could at a word have stilled the storm and stayed the raging of the sea.

Just then, during one of those momentary lulls sure to be succeeded by more terrific violence than before, a soft voice at my door asked permission to come in. Oh, with what an indescribable thrill of joy and thankfulness I recognized the tone!

“Yes! yes! come in, please. I am so glad, so very glad to have you with me, dear, kind Mrs. Graham. Oh, thank you! thank you a thousand times for coming!”

“Poor child!” she murmured, “how you have been coughing. I couldn’t sleep with all this wild confusion prevailing everywhere; and the sound of your cough distressed me so much, I thought I would come and see if I could give you anything to alleviate it.”

The tenderness of her manner awoke a

host of bygone memories, which, bearing on my previous sad thoughts, were too heavy to support just then, and, laying my throbbing forehead on her hand, I relieved my girl's heart by a violent flood of tears, which, for some minutes, Mrs. Graham made no effort to check, or I to restrain. Poor thing! I felt her own hot tears falling plentifully on my head as she bent over me. But not for long did Mary Graham thus yield to her feelings.

"You must now lie quiet, dear," she said presently, and with an effort at cheerfulness; "forget unpleasantnesses, and try to sleep, and to help you to do so I am going to read aloud."

While speaking she rose and trimmed the lamp, invalids being allowed to keep a lamp burning all night.

I scarcely recollect of what the subject of the book consisted ; I only know it was highly soothing to my perturbed feelings, being of a decidedly antagonistic character to the present dismal, uproarious state of affairs within and without, for it treated of the country, beautiful scenery, rural habits, and so on. By degrees a dreamy impression

possessed me that I was listening to the murmuring of a stream, the sweet harmony of matter and voice mingled so perfectly; then I became unconscious of anything more, and woke again to find it broad daylight, Mrs. Graham gone, and Jenny standing beside my bed, with my usual refresher in the morning—a cup of hot tea.

The rage of the storm had subsided, but its effects still remained upon sea and sky, which looked sullen and unpacified, dark and tempest-tossed. As the morning advanced, however, and the “Bird of Passage” sped rapidly on her way,—for the wind was favourable,—the weather cleared, and, to the joy of every one on board, by the evening there were bright unmistakable promises of a quiet night and coming fine weather.

But never from my heart will pass away the memory of that Christian act of the kind and gentle woman who, in the dead of night, left her bed to sit beside my sick couch—I, almost a stranger to her,—and, with great discomfort to herself, cheered, consoled, and soothed me to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

The one was cold, and cynical, and hard,
But yet her face and form were fair ;
No love looked forth her handsome eye,
No woman's tenderness was there.

The other was soft, and warm, and kind,
With azure eye, and noble brow,
And joyous laugh, and sweet girl's voice,
Which thrilled men's hearts to hear, I trow.

I HAVE already introduced you to one of my cabin neighbours, good reader, and now I must do so to those on the other side—Edith Grant and Lucy Frere—with whom I also became intimate, especially with the former, who was by far the more pleasing and amiable. These girls were cousins, and had been educated together at a large fashionable boarding-school in or near London, and were considered to have completed their education ; which education consisted in a

little superficial general knowledge, a few half-acquired accomplishments, and a boundless acquaintance with varieties, follies, and even vices of a kind little dreamed of, I feel sure, by those who placed them there. I have, perhaps, had more extensive opportunity than many others of witnessing the pernicious effects of such rearing,—the evil habits never after relinquished,—the secret wickedness instilled into the girlish mind by careless, unprincipled, subordinate teachers and depraved schoolfellows; yes, all I have since seen and known makes me no longer wonder at conduct and characters which then filled me with astonishment and horror! Well, these two girls were now on their way to join their parents in Upper India, there to turn to the best or worst account, as the case might be, that knowledge, evil and good, acquired in their own country, by making the one crowning compensation expected of them in return for all the trouble and expense thereby incurred, namely, an eligible marriage—eligible, that is, in point of wealth and position.

Both cousins were handsome, well-grown girls, of eighteen years of age, within a month or two of each other, and tall and fair; but there all further resemblance ceased between them; indeed, it is impossible to conceive two people more totally dissimilar, not only in person, but character, tastes, and temper. Lucy possessed a surly, low-browed, down-looking, heavy cast of countenance, which latter was, I thought, increased by a thick veil of hair, which, despite the then fashion, she allowed to fall in a mass of curls on either side her cheeks down to her waist, the back being arranged in a bewildering complication of rolls, plaits, and ringlets; indeed, she seemed hardly to know what to do with the over-abundant luxuriance. While reading, the only occupation I ever saw her engaged in, she had an unthinking habit of holding her hair against her thick-lipped, but well-formed mouth, and grinding, without actually biting, the grains between her teeth, which latter were white and regular. This ungainly trick was, I felt sure, indicative of some unamiable peculiarity of disposition, which I

often puzzled myself to try and discover. By nature Lucy Frere was silent and gloomy, but if roused into conversation, her remarks were generally of so bitter, so disagreeably precocious a character for a girl of her age, that had you not seen her while speaking, you could readily have believed they were the expressed sentiments of some disappointed elderly spinster of the world, whose path through life had been strown with thorns, planted there by that human nature which had shown her only its worst and darkest side. Indeed, I do not once remember to have heard Lucy speak without thinking what a pity it was, for her own sake, she did not always maintain that silence which she really seemed to prefer.

Edith Grant looked taller than her cousin ; but that was the result of a difference in style, shape, and manner, for in fact she was somewhat shorter. Her hair, too, was several shades darker than Lucy's, of a bright brown auburn, and was turned back from her forehead and face in the Eugénie fashion, then coming in, and which set off, to great

advantage, her extremely handsome animated features and brilliant complexion. She was of a light, lively disposition, and her conversation, perfectly free from sensoriousness, was amiable, piquant, and sensible. Faults she had, of course,—her manner was often, perhaps, too abrupt, and there was at times a certain brusquerie in voice and movement, rather jarring and unpleasant to the nerves of an invalid. Having from childhood enjoyed an enviable immunity from ill health, she could not at all understand or sympathize with the weaknesses and infirmities of the sick; and this made her sometimes appear, what in truth was far from the case, heartless, if not unkind.

Unhappily, too, the education which she, in common with her cousin, received, tended but little to draw out the best and noblest qualities of her really fine nature, but had, to a certain extent, sadly encouraged the defective. After all, however, her faults were not of a kind to injure any one but herself,—and hardly her, so argued and hoped her friends, to any great extent. So it was :

Edith's charming temper—which, though quick and impulsive, was totally free from any taint of malice or sulkiness—her beauty, and vivacity, soon rendered her a favourite with all the passengers, and with none more so, or perhaps as much, as with myself.

But the following dialogue between the cousins will, perhaps, better illustrate their different characters than any account of my own can do. They were in their cabin, the day intensely hot—a heat, of course, greatly aggravated by the vessel being becalmed—not a ripple moving the face of the great deep, nor a breath of air stirring the sails.

In justice to myself, I must, however, assure my readers that I lay listening, languid and unable to occupy myself, with feelings as innocent of any dishonourable intention towards the speakers as though we had been in the same cabin. I firmly believed they were as perfectly aware as myself of the distinctness with which voices were heard between certain cabins, arranged, if so needed, to open into each other by interior doors; and not until they commenced

speaking of myself did I discover my mistake. Then I strove immediately to rectify it by raising a warning cough—I was not at that time intimate with Edith, and lacked courage to speak—but they paid no heed, thinking, Edith afterwards told me when I informed her of my eavesdropping, that the sound came from the outside of their door.

CHAPTER VI.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous !

MRS. CANDOUR. So they are, child; shameful, shameful !
But the world is so censorious no character escapes.
La ! now, who would have suspected your friend ?

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

“COME, Lucy, do give up reading that stupid, immoral book you have been pouring over ever since breakfast, and talk to me a little ; you really are, without any exception, the most unsociable girl I know ! Nothing have you done all this dreadful hot morning but read that odious French novel, and sharpen your teeth upon your hair. The fact is, my dear, I am at present in the condition of a starving person, to whom even a crust, no matter how hard, is acceptable ; for I can’t go on deck, no ladies are there now, or none I care to associate with, and

the same objection applies to the cuddy, which at this hot time of day swarms only with gentlemen."

"Pray, Edith, cease that noise, will you ? I can't understand anything I am reading while you keep up that senseless clatter," was the cold, sarcastic answer.

"Senseless clatter!" repeated Edith, indignantly. "Now listen, Lucy—not one stitch of work will I do for you, either to-day or any other time, or anything to help you, if you will not trouble yourself to amuse me while I am occupied in your service. So look here—there lies your collar, and it depends upon you entirely when I take it up again."

"You seem to have been created for the sole purpose of being my constant scourge," replied her cousin, in an unmoved voice.

"The frequent application of which doth, I fear me, but tend yet more to harden instead of soften thy obdurate young heart," answered Edith, in a nasal, whining tone ; "albeit, I perceive, to my comfort, thou obstinate child, my threat hath so far taken

effect, that an unmistakable expression of annoyance hath come into thy stolid countenance, that, despite the best will in the world to effect it, thou canst not get everything and give nothing. However, to catch the tide at its flow, tell me, do you like our fellow-passengers?"

"There are upwards of forty!—no, I am not so benevolent," was the cynical answer.

"How can you talk such nonsense! You know I don't mean all, but some of them, and which?"

"And which?" repeated her cousin.

"What an aggravating girl you are, Lucy! Well, as you require such pumping, how do you like the Misses Adair? Aren't they nice, pretty little girls?"

"Fanny and Susan Adair? Well, yes, they are pretty, certainly; and their cousin seems of the same opinion—that Major Manners, into whose care their friends have so *judiciously* consigned them,"—the emphasized word was accompanied by a little, short, low, sneering laugh peculiar to Lucy Frere. Indeed, I never heard her indulge in any

other style of merriment, nor, it seemed to me, was that expression of amusement or satisfaction ever excited excepting on occasions when she ought rather to have sighed than laughed.

"What do you mean, Lucy? You are always so ambiguous in manner and words."

"I mean what I say — more, indeed. The gallant Major is making love to both, and the result is, the two poor little innocents are falling in love with him."

"Oh, what nonsense, Lucy!" exclaimed Edith, impatiently; "you are such a girl for thinking evil of everything! He's very kind to them—and no wonder, they are sweet little creatures—and I dare say he will fall fathoms deep in love with one or other before half the voyage is over, but certainly not with both; for, in the first place, they are so much alike, there is not a feature to choose between them."

"Nevertheless, he is making love to both," reiterated Lucy, in her passionless, obstinate voice, "and for any good likely to accrue

from his attentions, in whatsoever way bestowed, he may as well do so."

"How you talk, Lucy! And what can you possibly know about him or his intentions?"

"How you talk, Edith!" mimicked her cousin. "It so happens I am perfectly acquainted with both himself and his intentions."

A silence of a few seconds followed.

"Well, why can't you go on?" questioned Edith, impatiently.

"What a silly piece of curiosity you are, to be sure," replied the other, in a calm, cold tone, that contrasted oddly with the warmth of her companion's.

"The state of the case is this," continued the unamiable voice. "Major Manvers's family—and with whom he generally resided—live near my aunt's, where I always spent the holidays. He was married a few years ago, and soon after became divorced from his wife. People, of course, declared that the fault rested principally or entirely with her—the generous world always argues-



thus of every woman so placed—but there were some who affirmed he drove her to leave him by his cruelty and unkindness. Be that as it may, however, his further nuptial interests were in no way interfered with either by one report or the other, for he is now engaged to a handsome fool of a girl who comes into possession of a large fortune, in her own right, when she is of age, which will be in another year."

"And meanwhile," interposed Edith, "the handsome fool, as you call her, will fall in love with and marry some one else; and I hope she may, for I do not like Major Manvers at all."

Lucy laughed her short, sneering laugh.

"Do you think he looks like a man to manage, or rather mismanage his affairs in that way?" she said. "You are an ignorant judge of human nature, my dear, if you do. His family, who are every bit as worldly-wise as himself, and quite as anxious for the connexion, are so hedging her round, and guarding her from interlopers during this last anxious year, that she will be as

safe as though shut up in a nunnery. At the expiration of the time, one or other of them will bring her over to him to Calcutta (he can't return again to England under four years), and then and there they are to be married, and her doom fixed for better or worse."

"Well, judging from his appearance and manners, and all you now tell me, I should say for decidedly the latter," replied Edith. "But if the girl will possess so large a fortune, why need Major Manvers return to India any more? Why not have married her at once, and remained in England?"

"For two simple reasons," answered the other; "the gallant Major is at present six-and-thirty, and in four years more will complete the twenty spent in India, which entitles him to a good pension for the rest of his life; a substantial advantage, you see, not to be lightly cast aside when so near attainment."

"A decided case of 'penny wise and pound foolish,' I should say," rejoined Edith; "for depend upon it, despite all their care, the

prize will slip through their fingers before the year is out."

"Quite impossible," persisted Lucy; "the handsome girl is a ward in Chancery, an orphan residing under the care of her uncle, his father one of her guardians. In the same house live the Major's three sisters, tall, large, dark, determined women, in the presence of whom the poor simpleton dare not say Bo! to a goose."

"A disagreeable case of trapping!" exclaimed Edith, warmly; "poor unfortunate girl! But is she really a fool, Lucy, or is that only your usual amiable way of speaking?"

"Well, I don't know that she is more so than you are," was the quietly impertinent answer; "a handsome fool would be my definition of you, my dear."

"Oh, is that all!" replied Edith, in a tone of perfect indifference; "let me tell you, Lucy, I would rather, a thousand times, be even twice as much the fool you politely say I am than the wickedly clever girl you are."

A short laugh was the only answer.

"There is nothing aggravates me so much in you, Lucy, as that odious noise you are so fond of making by way of apology for a laugh," Edith said, impatiently; "why can't you laugh more amiably, or not at all? But the sound you utter is like nothing I have ever heard before, excepting—well, no matter what—but why don't you give a growl instead of a laugh? I am sure it would be very much more in accordance with your feelings than the latter, and I should infinitely prefer it."

A more prolonged indulgence of the objectionable laugh than any of the preceding followed these words; but for once there was a ring of genuine amusement in it that excited Edith's love of the ludicrous, and, instantly recovering her good-humour, she responded with one of her own heartfelt bursts of merriment that was delightful to hear.

How curiously, thought I, the laugh marks the character! What a contrast between Edith Grant's heedless, joyous, kindly tones, and Miss Frere's cold, cynical expression of mirth, or rather scorn, for it is impossible

to conceive anything less mirthful than is her laugh !

“ Now don’t begin reading again, Lucy,” cried Edith presently ; “ every time that odious book goes up, your work goes down —mind that. I only wish I could lay my disapproving hands on that store of detestable French novels you have taken such care to provide for your unhealthy delectation during the voyage ; I declare, on my word, I would cast the whole lot into the sea, and quite rejoice to see their impure bodies drifting away into eternity.”

“ I have not the slightest doubt you would, my dear ; and it will be my fault if ever the power falls into your disapproving hands,” said Lucy.

“ I can do nothing,” continued Edith, “ but think of poor, pretty, little Fanny Adair, whom that good-for-naught man is making love to in such a monopolizing manner, and knowing all the while, too, he cannot marry her, yet keeping her exclusively apart—indeed, both of them, for that matter—from all the other gentlemen.”

"Pour passer le temps, ma chère, that's all," sneered Lucy. "It's very natural; *you* will become desperate by and by with the dullness of the place, and take to the same little amusement yourself."

"I?" exclaimed Edith's honest voice, in a tone of disgust. "Never! *You* might do so, and no doubt will, for you are so unfeeling, Lucy; but it is not in my nature to trifle seriously with any man; in truth, their distress would make me considerably more miserable than with all the will in the world I could render them; so I will not venture."

"You are a handsome fool, my dear, as I said, therefore I quite believe you; for myself, I do not, as you know, go in for either heart or soul,—the latter I merely regard as a chimera of the human brain; and for the former—well, there is, of course, a something in my left side, a tough, hard something, that answers the purpose of a heart in promoting the circulation of my blood—but nothing more."

"Well," rejoined her cousin, sadly; "all I

can say is, if the direst retributive justice doesn't, sooner or later, come thundering down on the head of that vicious, wicked old *Mademoiselle Dulez*, for the irreparable mischief she has done you, to say nothing of the many other unfortunate girls whose temporal and eternal interests she has and is ruining, I am greatly mistaken. Thank God for that instinctive feeling of dislike *I* conceived to her on the very first day we met, and which only gained strength with longer acquaintance! Oh, Lucy! when I remember what a different girl you were before we went to that last odious school, and consigned to the care of that still more odious *Maude Dulez*!"

A skilful imitation of a low growl of a wild beast was the only answer, and which immediately drew forth an irrepressibly hearty laugh from the volatile Edith.

"One thing I am determined to do, and that the very first opportunity that offers," continued the latter, as soon as she could speak; "I will not allow the two Adairs to go on in the dark, but thoroughly enlighten

them concerning the position and intentions of their cousin."

"And as the more difficult of attainment anything is, the more it is valued, especially in love affairs," observed Lucy, sarcastically; "the wicked Major will, without doubt, be proportionably grateful to you."

"That I can't help," rejoined Edith, quickly; "I shall do my duty—the result must rest with them; but to stand quietly by and see that selfish man systematically trying to win the heart of pretty, dark-eyed, little Fanny, for no other motive but the amusement of his idle hours, would be quite beyond me to bear."

"What a female Quixote you are, to be sure!" sneered her cousin; "your wicked Major is not one whit worse than other men, in my opinion; he simply agrees with that popular moral poet—

Oh ! 'tis sweet to think that where'er we rove,
We are sure to find something blissful and dear ;
And that when we're far from the lips we love,
We have but to make love to the lips we are near.

The heart like a tendril accustom'd to cling,
Let it grow where it will, cannot flourish alone,
But will lean to the nearest and loveliest thing
It can twine with itself, and make closely its own.

Then oh ! what pleasure where'er we rove,
To be doom'd to find something still that is dear,
And to know, when far from the lips we love,
We have but to make love to the lips we are near.

"Twere a shame when flowers around us rise
To make light of the rest, if the rose is not there,
And the world's so rich in resplendent eyes,
"Twere a pity to limit one's love to a pair."

" There, that will do, Lucy !" interposed Edith, impatiently, " I hate those verses—you know I do ! and all in that style ! "

" They are the sentiments of your favourite poet, my dear," was the ironical answer.

" But why," continued Edith, passionately, " why need you invariably select your quotations, of which you are always so fond, from the most objectionable parts of any book or subject ? Even when they abound, like the melodies, in beautiful verses, you make a point, it seems to me, of shunning the good, and picking out the bad ! "

" For the plain reason, my dear, that I,

unlike you, study ‘the fitness of things,’—that’s why,” said Lucy.

How unfeeling, cold, calm, and utterly heartless were the tones of her voice, in contrast to Edith’s honest warm words and manner!

“Oh, that horrible old Maude Dulez!” exclaimed the latter in an angry, regretful tone, “and those detestable profane French novels! both equally the most successful, useful emissaries the evil one possesses!”

Lucy laughed; then added, “Well, have you had enough? May I now listen to the more agreeable conversation of this useful emissary of the evil one?”

“As you like, but you know my terms; if you don’t want the collar finished, by all means continue devouring that poisonous food you so delight in, and much good may it do you.”

“My full belief is,” said Lucy, “you are keeping up this interesting conversation for the sole purpose of preventing my reading.”

“How do you like Miss Irvin, Lucy?” (myself, good reader) resumed Edith, ignoring her cousin’s accusation.

For some minutes, confused by the previous conversation, I did not realize the fact that it was myself of whom they were speaking ; and as the ayahs employed on board were constantly in the habit of squatting about on the floor just without the cabins, the two girls naturally enough mistook the direction of the admonitory cough I soon after raised, thinking it came from one of those black attendants, especially as I lay on my sofa-couch, which, as they generally are, was placed on a line with the door, and next to the passage.

"Not at all," replied the amiable Lucy ; "she is disagreeable in every way—to me at least—looks, manner, and conversation."

"In every way! Well, that is sweeping down a poor girl's merits with a vengeance ; but, as usual, our tastes utterly disagree, for, in my opinion, she is particularly agreeable—kind, obliging, lady-like in manners, and amiable in disposition. She is very lovely, too ; and such a combination does not constitute a disagreeable person, let me tell you, Miss Lucy."

"Lovely! yes, if you can consider a corpse lovely!" sneered her cousin.

"What an unfeeling way of speaking!" said Edith, warmly. "A corpse! She looks ill, certainly, but it is a style of delicacy that many people think beautiful. Besides, time will remedy that; she is much improved already, and before long will become quite beautiful, you will see."

Again came the low derisive laugh.

"I mean to try and persuade her to come more into the cuddy for the future," continued Edith. "I am convinced, if she mixed in cheerful society, and laughed, and talked, and forgot her woes, she would be quite different in a very short time."

"I have no doubt she would," was the cold reply.

"What makes you smile, Lucy?" asked her cousin, impatiently. "I wish you would speak out, and not think all sorts of things to yourself in that provoking way."

"I was thinking, my dear, your last speech and yourself are a counterpart of each other, that's all."

"What do you mean?" inquired Edith, pettishly.

“Why, according to my notion of such things, your beautiful and fascinating Miss Irvin is on a voyage of discovery to a rather distant world, and persons so circumstanced are not usually disposed to much talking, laughing, and capering about with a crowd of noisy boys and girls.”

“Noisy boys and girls! What a polite way of describing us! Joking apart, too, what absurdity to talk of men and women in that manner! Besides, are we not all making the same voyage,—at least to the same part of the world, though our destinations will, of course, vary afterwards?”

“Oh, yes, certainly.”

“What are you laughing again to yourself about?” asked Edith, with increasing irritation.

“Nothing: there, pray don’t stare at me in that foolishly, open-eyed, innocent way, Edith; you will make me laugh in earnest, if you do—a very discomforting proceeding this hot weather.”

“Well, it little matters what you mean or what you think; all I know is, Miss Irvin

is extremely admired by every one else I have spoken to on board, and particularly by the gentlemen, despite her invalid appearance."

"The gentlemen!" was repeated in tones of such intense scorn, that I felt actually startled by the force, the almost fierce energy thrown into the words, as also into those which followed. "As if any girl of the commonest sense or experience would allow herself to be biassed by men's distorted, prejudiced opinions of her sex, either as regards their looks or character! Why, do you remember that Miss Grey, with a pair of mustachios a young dragoon might have prized—and a Miss Caxton, who squinted frightfully? Don't you recollect they were both the belles of the crowded ball-room at Medley, while Miss Adams, notwithstanding her Madonna face and fine figure, scarcely danced at all? Bah! Men are fools, idiots, concerning women—their attractions, dispositions, and tempers."

"Unfortunately, dear," interrupted Edith, laughing gaily at her cousin's vehemence,

"although what you say is certainly true, yet so it is, and, I am afraid, so it ever will be. Men's judgment upon women, as well as on most other things, rules the world, and we poor creatures have no choice left us but to submit. But there, perhaps after all they are the best judges."

"Best judges!" repeated Lucy, in a voice of still greater scorn; "and what does that judgment amount to? Simply this—"

What it amounted to, however, we were not destined to learn, for, at that instant, flying footsteps came down the passage, quickly followed by the bursting open of their cabin-door, and the unceremonious entrance of a young lady, whose voice I instantly recognized as that of a Miss Brown, a girl whose manners and conduct were so singular, that a general impression already prevailed on board of her being of unsound mind. When I say general, however, I ought to add, among the more charitably-disposed towards her, for many there were who unhesitatingly set down her peculiarities to the charge of wild wilfulness, if not wicked-

ness of temper and disposition. She was, to the last degree, untidy and careless in her habits and ways, utterly regardless of propriety, and ignored, as far as she dared venture, all the amenities of society. In fact, her recklessness of conduct ultimately became so distressing to a young lady passenger, who shared her cabin, that a good-natured old lady proposed to the latter to remove into hers, which, being in the stern, was double the size of the other cabins. This proposition, which was most gratefully and eagerly accepted, so far from occasioning any annoyance to Sophy Brown, proved a matter of exceeding amusement and self-gratulation to her lawless young heart. Every other girl on board would have deemed herself disgraced by the arrangement; she, on the contrary, openly expressed unbounded satisfaction, boasting, with ecstatic humour, to all the gentlemen, of the cuckoo skill (so she termed it) with which she had ejected the luckless hedge-sparrow from the nest, and assailing the said hedge-sparrow, whenever caught sight of, with a clever imitation

of the sweet notes of the former, no whit less musical, I thought, coming from those rosy young lips. Happily, however, her caprices were variable as the wind, perhaps more so; and the affair was soon forgotten amidst more exciting events.

CHAPTER VII.

The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in ;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.—BURNS.

SOPHY BROWN, the daughter of an officer of some standing in the Indian army, had, at an early age, been sent to England, and placed by relatives, who did not care to be troubled by her presence, in a large mixed school in the city end of London. Even the holidays of the poor child were passed there, or at the home of some one of her schoolfellows; and thus she had grown up unloved, unpitied, and but little cared for, until the approach of her seventeenth birthday, when an order arrived from her parents to equip and send her to join them in India.

As may be supposed, not possessing that wisdom in the choice of school associates which, even in a worldly point of view, was to be wished for, she had evidently, and by her own account, selected them from amongst the worst principled and most undesirable in the whole community of girls. And it was with these friends she sometimes spent her holidays,—periods which, according to the rambling, broken confessions she occasionally favoured us with, were the most morally dangerous in her past neglected young life. The free and easy familiarity of home life with such companions, recklessly described by Sophy, was sufficient of itself to instil more evil into her soul than a lengthened existence of after care would have had power to eradicate, even had so blessed a change of circumstance been in store for her, which was far from the case.

Notwithstanding her extreme youth—for she was, as has been said, scarcely yet seventeen—her sentiments and opinions were, if possible, more precocious than Lucy Frere's; and, no matter who her auditors,

would often astonish them, and that with undisguised amusement, by remarks as objectionable in themselves as unsuited to her sex and age.

Mad she might have been, but certainly not silly, as the sharp wit and keenness of perception which marked her character and words plainly declared ; indeed, it would have been impossible to *prove* this unfortunate girl's positive want of sanity, while at the same time no one who was an hour in her company could, I feel sure, honestly affirm she was of perfectly sound mind. A Mrs. Hall, a friend of her mother's, was taking Sophy Brown nominally under her supervision to India—*nominally*, I say ; for not, it seemed, having had the faintest conception of the real style of character of her protégée, the lady was so disgusted, even horrified, by the too late discovery, and so naturally fearful of the evil influence of such unprincipled society for her own young daughter, that she discouraged as much as possible the poor child's presence in her cabin, or any companionship with the former. I thought then,

and I think now, Mrs. Hall did wrong, very wrong, to thus exclude the friendless girl from all intercourse with herself and Miss Hall, and turn her almost entirely adrift, to follow unchecked the wild devices of her unreasoning nature. Some arrangement she ought and might have made, and some strenuous efforts to soften, christianize, and improve generally the disposition and conduct of such a mere child during the long period that lay before them, wherein to effect good; and I cannot but think much might have resulted had a right course been pursued. I the more wondered at Mrs. Hall's conduct, as did also the majority of the passengers, by reason of her being a lady of professedly strict religious principles; and it was this profession of holiness she made the excuse for her desertion of the unhappy young creature entrusted to her charge. Her only fair apology was her daughter, who was a timid, shy girl, modest and sensitive, and positively quite afraid of wild Sophy Brown, to whom this latter discovery became only matter of intense amusement,

wickedly delighting herself, whenever an opportunity offered, in playing upon the childish terrors of Alice Hall, and in shocking her delicacy.

Unfortunately for this strange wayward girl, she was singularly beautiful in figure and face,—of middle height, slight but exquisitely formed,—and her movements as light and graceful as a young gazelle's. Never before had I met with any creature so restless and untiring, so quick and impulsive; while her eyes, large, dark, and thickly fringed with long lashes, were like wells of luminous light. Bright though they were, however, there lay within their depths a peculiar fixed expression of wistful sadness, that from the first drew my heart towards her, in spite of the many faults which marred her character. Her complexion, in unison with her capricious nature, varied in a remarkable degree. Always clear and delicate, it possessed, at times, the unsullied whiteness of the lily, then again bloomed with all the rich brightness of the rose. Reckless, excitably passionate, and of a wild, half frantic vivacity, it was well

for her pretty laughter-loving lips they framed teeth of exquisite beauty and regularity ; but woe betide any one who by chance or intention offended her, for, on the instant, smiles and mirthfulness vanished from feature and form, giving place to a dangerously spiteful, angry temper, which she made no effort to restrain, even within the commonest rules of social propriety. Unhappily for such a nature, no position could be conceived more injurious, if not perilous, than the one Sophy now revelled in ; for, loving admiration, pleasure, and activity, she was enabled to gratify all to her heart's content amidst the incessant whirl of excitement prevailing around her. And it was with feelings of deep regret Mary Graham and I marked that daily increasing unsteadiness of mind which, if not actual insanity, was certainly not far removed from it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Listen to me, and if you speak me fair,
I'll tell you news indifferent good for either.

SHAKSPEARE.

“WELL, how are you both, my darlings?” exclaimed the lively visitor, in clear, ringing tones. “Why you are both looking as sedate as a couple of owls in the daylight. Lucy is peering out of her ivy bush as usual.” (Miss Brown seldom encumbered her speech with people’s surnames.) “Yes, I see you! you are not hid from me—not even your *mind*,” laughing with malicious gleefulness. Then, without waiting for an answer, “Oh! I have been dying all this morning to get here and tell you something. What do you think! that horrid old thing, Mrs. Hall, after leaving me to work my own sweet will on self and

others for the last three weeks, actually took it into her ugly head this morning that I should come and sit in her horrid dark cabin and do a lot of needlework ! Needlework ! I would every bit as soon help to holystone the deck—indeed, much sooner for that matter; but, best of all, I was not to talk the whole time I was there ; no, nor move either ! Did you ever hear of such a thing before ? Rank tyranny, wasn't it ? But did not I talk, that's all, pretending to forget her injunction ; and didn't I move about incessantly, and jump up and down for all sorts of things which were close by my hand all the while, till I saw the old lady getting into a perfect fever. And such things I said, too, affecting to be so delightfully innocent at the same time ! Oh ! after all, it was capital fun ! I'll be bound she will be in no hurry to invite me to work for her again, and electrify the sensibilities of that humdrum little daughter of hers, who has not courage to say, Bo ! to a goose. What a rage the old lady was in before I had sat, or rather pranced about, for half an hour !—her ugly face flamed red as a turkey-cock !”

Sophy concluded with a loud, defiant, ecstatic laugh, in which I heard Lucy's low, cynical tones mingling; but Edith, I was glad to hear, expressed decided disapproval of Sophy's conduct, saying that Mrs. Hall, having acted as she had now done, was evidently with intent to hold out the hand of friendship and kindly interest to her charge, and Sophy was wrong, very wrong, to reject it.

"Horrid old thing!" continued the incorrigible girl; "what do I care for her friendship or interest? I am only too delighted that her dislike of me keeps pace with mine of her, for that secures me an amount of liberty I should never have been allowed by any one less sanctimonious than my equally amiable chaperon. Chaperon! She is nicely that, is she not? But, oh! what a jolly place a vessel is! Do not you think so?" cried this wild girl, suddenly changing the subject, and giving way to a burst of uncontrolled spirits, for I could hear her light feet jumping and capering round the small cabin.

"I really wish you would oblige me by taming down a little when you favour us with your society, Miss Brown," observed Lucy Frere, sarcastically. "Could you manage, do you think, to sit quietly on a chair, like any other human being?"

"Look here," replied Sophy, apparently ignoring Lucy's words; but there was a tone in them that, to my ear, was ominous of mischief. "Give me both your separate opinions, honestly,—how do you like this marine life? You are, of course, the elder by a couple of years or more, Lucy, so please deliver your sentiments first."

The two girls did not seem to think it worth while to gratify the wild thing's curiosity concerning their ages, and, after a moment's silence, the latter added,—

"I could tell you to a word the feelings, for and against, with which you regard it, but I will not, because I want to see if I am right. Come, Lucy, speak, will you?"

"I do not think much, or, perhaps, at all about it," she replied, in a tone of perfect indifference. "Things are good enough, and,

on the whole, pleasant enough in their way : I have all I want, or rather all I expect, under the circumstances, and that is all I care for."

"Oh, capital ! excellent !" cried her questioner, ecstatically clapping her hands ; "that is just what I thought of you—just what I know."

"I do not see how you can know anything about the matter, despite your boasting," answered Miss Frere, in a cold, sulky voice. "You have occasionally seen me during the last three weeks, and we have been acquainted for about one, if it can be called acquaintance at all, which I do not."

"Acquainted only one week !" repeated the girl, mockingly ; "as if it needed more than the seeing you merely for *one day*, to discover exactly what sort of person you are ! Why, you are the most undisguised, transparent character I ever met with ; transparent as glass, or as a stream of water, beneath whose depths I can clearly distinguish the bed, covered with—what think you ?"

How I wished I could see Sophy's beautiful wild face as she thus spoke!—its strange, changeful expressions must have been curious.

"I am sure I do not know," said Miss Frere, in a somewhat appeased tone, half flattering herself that the similes of the glass and the limpid water were suggestive of a compliment.

"Why, of mud!" screamed the rude little thing, shrieking with elfish laughter; "of mud, which, if you but touch ever so lightly, instantly comes up, and mingles with and darkens and taints every drop of falsely-bright water: and nothing but mud and nastiness is there to come up; and the stream only tastes of mud; and every flower growing on its banks springs only from mud—dirty mud—mud, mud!"

And again I could hear, by her jumps and bounds, that her exuberant spirits were "taking it out" in her own peculiar style of gymnastics. Then, with a rapid change of mood, she stopped, saying,—

"Oh, but what do you think I have got

to tell you? Such fun! better than all the rest! Last night I was up, with a great many more people, on deck, by moonlight, walking up and down with Mr. Bouverie, and presently he left me for a few minutes to get a glass of water to drink. I stood waiting for him by the side of the vessel, and, happening to look round, I saw that tall, dark, handsome Major Manvers sitting, almost out of general sight, on a coil of rope, with one of his cousins—the prettier of them, Fanny; and he had his arm round her waist, bending over her, and talking so earnestly, that I felt wild to know what he was saying. Fortunately, a sail came close down to the deck on one side of them, and behind that I crept and listened."

"Oh, fie! Sophy!" exclaimed Edith.

"And I heard him telling her how dearly he loved every glance of her eye and sound of her voice," continued Sophy, with increasing vehemence; "and it was only her he did, or ever had, or ever should love—and only her, his sweet, pretty, little cousin, he would marry; and then he kissed her

again and again, and was just beginning to ask her to marry him directly they reached Calcutta, when some persons passed by in an opposite direction to where I stood—people always come where they are not wanted—and the lovers took fright, and jumped up and walked away. Wasn't it fortunate my fat little chevalier took it into his head to be thirsty just at that lucky moment? If he had not, I should never have discovered either them or their secret; and won't I laugh at them both now, and torment Fanny to death!"

"He has lost no time, it seems," I heard Edith say, in an annoyed, indignant tone; "the false, heartless—"

"I popped back to my place just before Mr. Bouverie joined me again," interrupted the heedless Sophy; "and there was the little man apologizing, all in a heat and a hurry, for having left me so long; and didn't he stare his round eyes when I told him he couldn't have done anything that would have pleased me better. He asked, 'Why,' in such an amazed, offended tone, that I

half laughed myself into a fit, and was very nearly telling him all about it for fun ; but, besides not liking him, I do not want to displease the gallant Major, so merely said I had a good reason, he might be sure, but which I would not tell. He did not seem much better satisfied, stupid, little fat thing ! Oh, but I have something else to tell you ! My budget is full of news this morning, isn't it ?"

"Now, Sophy," said Edith, gravely, "you have talked enough for this morning ; only look at your cheeks, they are so heated and red ! Go to your cabin, there's a good child, and have a little sleep before dinner."

"Sleep !" repeated the wild girl, in a voice of intense disgust. "But, there," she continued more quietly, "I don't mind what you say, Edith, for I like you better than any one ; you are so pretty and good-natured, and may always scold me as much as you choose ; I do not care a bit—not I."

"I should feel very much more flattered and satisfied if you did, Sophy, I assure

you," rejoined her friend; then added, laughing, "However, if you do not care a bit, I may as well save myself the trouble of speaking; it will be only time lost."

"What do you think of this?" Sophy went on; "what do you think of my having had a love-letter? I saw it this morning when I was getting up; some one must have pushed it under my door while I was asleep. Was not that jolly?"

"A love-letter! From whom?" inquired Edith.

"Ah, that's the funniest part,—for not the remotest conception have I of the writer; nor, by the manner of the men, can I find out or even guess."

"It is an anonymous billet-doux, then?"

"No, indeed—Arthur Delamere is signed at the end. Isn't that a beautiful name?"

"Oh, beautiful!" rejoined Edith, in a voice of irrepressible amusement, followed by Lucy's low derisive laugh, but this time with more of genuine mirthfulness than usual.

"Most likely it was from Mr. Bouverie,

notwithstanding the romantic name," suggested Edith.

"Mr. Bouverie!" repeated Sophy, in accents of unmitigated contempt. The expression of her animated face must have been highly ludicrous, for Edith could scarcely speak for laughing.

"Well, but he is always so attentive to you—quite devoted."

"Yes, horrid little wretch! He is one of those ugly, vain creatures who go through life deluded with the idea—an idea which no amount of repulse or mortification can ever alter—that every girl who treats them politely is in love with their stupidity and ugliness;" and Sophy laughed with spiteful glee, adding quickly, "it is such a nice, beautifully written letter, begging me to tell him if there is anything he can do to make me comfortable, for he is afraid I am not very happy. I don't know what puts that notion into his head," continued the wild girl, again laughing merrily, "for I never was happier in my life; however, it's clear he does not think so, and petitions for just

one line, which I am to push under the door before I go to bed."

"But you will not do anything of the kind, of course, Sophy," exclaimed Edith, earnestly; "you do not know who or what the man may be, and under any circumstances—"

"I want to show you the letter," broke in the wild thing. "Let me see, where is it? I thought I put it into my pocket. Oh! horror of horrors!—if I should only have left it in the old saint's cabin!—why, it will raise a storm enough to wreck the ship! I must run off and see at once; perhaps I may be so lucky as to find it first;" and then a loud laugh, which told much more of anticipated fun than danger, followed by the slamming of their cabin-door and rapidly retreating footsteps, proclaimed the departure of the frantic young visitor.

Immediately after, the dressing-bell rang for dinner, which speedily brought Jenny in attendance upon me.

CHAPTER IX.

Still blacker clouds, that all the skies invade,
Draw o'er his sullied orb a dismal shade.
Clouds rolled on clouds, the dusky noon o'ercast,
The blackening ocean curls, the waves arise,
And the dark scud in swift succession flies.

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the rider of the wind,
The stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I leave behind
Is yet with lightning warm.—BYRON.

“Oh, Mary, what a dreadful looking sea!” I exclaimed, as one very hot, sultry evening Mrs. Graham and I stood together leaning against the ship’s side, watching the black mass of surging waters, rising and falling, and tumbling the worried “Bird of Passage” to and fro in a most incomprehensible manner; for, in spite of all this commotion,

not a breath of wind was stirring ; and, except the low, ominous sound of the heaving ocean, and occasional dash, as fiercely violent as unexpected, of a gigantic wave against the labouring vessel, shaking her timbers from end to end, silence quite death-like held sea and sky. As yet these noiseless attacks had proved so harmless—causing no inconvenience or feeling but that of merriment at their impotent, though awful appearance—that we were beginning to wholly disregard them.

“ Does not the sea in its present state,” I said, “ remind you of that beautiful verse in Isaiah, ‘ The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt ; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked ? ’ Is not this a perfect illustration of the words ? ”

Mary did not answer, and I saw that her soft eyes were full of tears. Greatly I longed to throw my arms around her, and beg her to confide in and tell me all her sorrow ; but I did not at that time. I appeared not to observe her distress, and continued saying, indifferently,—

"I fear we shall encounter another of those storms to-night which frightened us all before ; the whole atmosphere is coloured with such a strange murky shade of light, is it not ? And did you ever feel anything so oppressively hot—almost unendurable ? And this lifeless calm ! What does it all portend, I wonder ? If we were near a burning mountain, I should expect a frightful eruption before morning, and perhaps an earthquake to boot."

Just then Captain Henley was passing by, and, without stopping, growled out, in his usual gruff, abrupt, broken manner,—

"Storm to-night ; glass sinking rapidly ; a tempest coming. I shall lay-to before long, if matters don't mend."

"There, dear, you have your answer from the fountain-head," observed Mary Graham, smiling through her tears. "That was very comforting information indeed ! And, hark ! how, all the way he goes, he scatters right and left the same heart-cheering predictions!"

Our worthy old commander was notorious on board for viewing everything, no matter

what—weather, people, health, circumstances—in the very gloomiest light possible; in his mind, doubts, objections, and evil to come attached to all. Poor old man! he was one of those unhappily constituted people, the brightness of whose present is continually darkened by a foreboding future—who, utterly rejecting any belief in the poetical “silver lining,” give full credit to the same hopeless gloom pervading the whole cloud which its sad face presents. Captain Henley could not, on any occasion, bring himself to grant an unqualified assent: he seemed determinately careful never to peril his reputation, as it were, by expressing an opinion that might, after all, prove incorrect; and where no loop-hole for even a single complaint was to be found, he “hoped it might be as it seemed,” and, “Oh, yes, it was well enough now, but it wouldn’t last; no, it was sure not to last”—and so on, and so on.

“The present case certainly looks too dark to admit of taking any brighter view of it,” I observed; “but, were it otherwise, Captain

Henley would obstinately shut his prejudiced eyes to the fact, for I am positive he, on the whole, prefers an uncomfortable state of affairs to one of such unmistakable smoothness that all complaint is set at open defiance."

Mrs. Graham laughed her sweet apologetic laugh when speaking of the failings of others, saying,—

"Nevertheless, he is a good, kind-hearted old man, in spite of all his little faults, which do no one any harm, not even himself. They are simply a species of safety-valve for his naturally over-anxious nature and irritable temper, consequent upon the ceaseless friction of the most trying, responsible position it is possible for a man to be placed in, and which position he would be ill suited indeed to fill were he not to regard the doing so in the serious, God-fearing light he does."

Edith came on deck and joined us while we were yet standing. She looked, I thought, more than usually handsome, for her cheeks were flushed, and an angry expression curled her well-formed upper lip; and, as was her

manner when displeased, she haughtily threw back her head in walking—a movement particularly becoming to the proud, refined style of her countenance.

“What is the matter?” I asked, laughing; “you look a beautiful tragedy queen of indignation!”

“You will hardly believe it!” she exclaimed, in an incensed voice; “but there is that Major Manvers and his cousins sitting on one of those rolls of sails lately placed, you know, in the centre of the gangway, just opposite that side opening, and where you must pass close by to come up on deck; well, there they are, romping about in a manner that would be highly improper anywhere, but in so public a place, oh, it’s disgusting! How deplorably changed those once timid, modest girls must have become, to submit to, or worse, to seem actually to enjoy such behaviour!”

“Changed, indeed!” responded Mary and I.

“Yes, and opposite this disorderly trio, on another sail, was,—or rather is, for I hear

them all still there,—that mad Sophy Brown and flirting Mrs. Irskew, surrounded by gentlemen, who were lounging about them in every conceivable posture of easy familiarity, laughing and screaming at each other's bold jokes, practical as well as verbal. Hark! did you ever hear a noise like that among ladies and gentlemen before? *I never did!*"

Certainly the roars and shrieks of merriment issuing from the quarter of the objectionable party was enough to frighten the very sharks out of their murderous wits.

"Really," continued Edith, "if some stop is not put to these disgraceful goings on, they will come to such a pass every modest girl will be obliged to confine herself to her cabin. Just fancy, if the Adairs' poor old grandmother, with whom from their babyhood they lived a simple, modest, country life to the period of their just leaving England—only fancy if she could, for one instant, see her so tenderly brought up darlings now!—why, it would, I am sure, drive her out of her mind at once!"

"It is, indeed, very distressing to all right-minded persons," observed Mary, "to be obliged to witness so much evil being carried on in large crowded vessels of this kind—powerless at the same time as they are to prevent or in the slightest degree hinder it,—knowing, too, that the greater portion could be effectually obviated by a trustworthy protection being secured for the numberless young girls who are daily going out to India to join their parents and friends. These two little Adairs are subjects especially of regret and sorrow to me, for there is a sweetness and a child-like innocence in their young faces which, one thinks, cannot but emanate from amiable, well-inclined hearts."

"Oh! it is so sad their being confided to the care of such a man as that Major Manvers!" exclaimed Edith, vehemently. "What could their friends have been thinking of! His principles are decidedly infidel, and his conversation, from parts I have occasionally overheard, anything but fit for the ears of young modest girls. Then, too, the books he constantly lends them to read are, in my

opinion, as objectionable as, perhaps more dangerous than, his conversation."

"Oh, yes; I quite agree with you, Edith," I replied; "and nothing could give me a worse opinion of any man than his encouraging ignorant, inexperienced girls in such an evil pastime. I could never believe his motive was unintentionally harmless."

"Lucy gave me a whole history of Major Manvers's affairs," continued Edith, "and I took the first opportunity of relating them to Fanny Adair, who, to my surprise, was even more conversant on the subject than my cousin, for she added the information that the Major came to England intending to marry the aforesaid heiress, and take her back to India for the remaining four years, but was prevented completing his plan by her having been made a ward in Chancery by one of her uncles (not the father of her intended) during the absence of the latter from England."

"Oh, I see now," rejoined I; "it was under the care of himself and wife the two Adairs were to be brought out to their parents in India?"

"Yes," replied Edith, "that was the arrangement."

While we were thus talking, Lucy Frere came on deck, and, with great difficulty, owing to the rolling of the vessel,—Lucy not having gained her *sea-footing*, as it is termed, as quickly as the rest of us,—advanced to where we stood. An unpleasing, sarcastic smile played round her mouth as she said, in her cold, quiet manner,—

"I have just seen a party who are very wisely making the most of the passing hour; and as you, Edith, are so fond of fun and frolic, I should recommend your joining them. Among such a swarm of gay Lotharios some will be sure to immediately devote themselves to you."

Edith flushed angrily, but did not answer, and, turning to me, said,—

"Have you heard that the writer of Sophy's *billet-doux* was John Smith, the head *cuddy servant*?"

"A *cuddy servant*!" exclaimed Mary and I, in breathless astonishment.

"Yes; but fortunately the wild girl left

the letter in Mrs. Hall's cabin, and she found it, and, without entering into any contest with Sophy, gave it instantly to Captain Henley, requesting him to find out and reprove the writer. Of course she had not, at that time, the most distant suspicion of his being other than one of the gentlemen passengers; but upon Captain Henley discovering the truth, which was effected by setting a watch the same night, you may imagine the wrath of the worthy old skipper. The result was, that John Smith, *alias* Arthur Delamere, was immediately struck off the roll of *cuddy* servants, and sent "forrard," as the sailors call it, being despatched to the foremost part of the ship, to work for or with themselves; and there he is to continue for the remainder of the passage."

"Poor silly creature!" said Mary Graham. "Yes, I remember seeing him in the *cuddy*, a not over-wise, but good-looking man. Some one told me he had been a clerk or assistant of some kind in a London bank, and, having fallen into ill health, was making this voyage in order, if possible, to restore his lost

strength ; but, being too poor to pay for his passage, undertook to work his way out as a servant."

" What a lucky thing it was that careless child left the note in Mrs. Hall's cabin, or really, so frantic as she is, and wanting in all propriety, the consequences might have proved *very* unpleasant!"

" The consequences might have proved *very* unpleasant!" mimicked Lucy, so exactly in her cousin's warm-hearted, honest-toned voice, that even the lively girl herself could not restrain a little half-angry laugh, in which Mary and I joined.

Now at that instant—though the treacherous wind was yet asleep—the sea with a sudden impetus arose, and came thundering and crashing against the "Bird of Passage," and sent her reeling over on one side; while the mighty body of water, for the first time this evening, breaking the bounds hitherto imposed on it, rushed upwards to a fearful height, and then descended, without sign or warning, directly into the midst of a large knot of gentle-

men who were lounging, laughing, and talking at some distance below, on the same side with ourselves. Their discomfiture was as complete as, I must uncharitably confess, we girls thought it ludicrous, for the whole party, shouting half in terror, half in amusement, were instantly dispersed, like chaff before the wind. Two or three were knocked down, and narrowly avoided accompanying the insurgent waves out to sea; and one and all were, they afterwards told us, wet through.

Edith laughed most unmercifully—indeed, we all laughed,—it was impossible for us, girls as we were, to help doing so; besides which, I am sorry, for the honour of our sex, to say it, there is nothing more entertaining to young ladies than a burlesque discomfiture of gentlemen.

However, the warning was not lost upon ourselves, for we forthwith changed our intention of remaining on deck together and having tea there, and instead thereof decided to go down to the cuddy.

The capricious movements of the vessel

had now become perfectly outrageous—dipping and diving, and rolling right and left like an intoxicated thing; and it required all our newly-acquired skill and carefulness to make safe way below. Exceedingly amused by the novelty of our position, however, and laughing so much, even Lucy joining, that it helped to impede our progress, we staggered and tumbled along the deck, which presented a succession of hills and valleys, till, arrived at the top of the stairs, we made a halt to recover breath, and muster up a fresh supply of courage.

“Take care of heads, I warn you!” cried Edith, “as you come down these horrid steps. I gave mine an awful knock yesterday against the beam on the top; and this vulture of a ‘Bird of Passage’ is just in the murderous mood to enjoy breaking our necks, or any other little piece of fun of that kind. Look, this is my way of managing the matter.” And turning her back to the stairs, and holding the baluster firmly on either side, she effected a safe descent. Lucy followed her example, but I and Mary

Graham preferred facing the danger. We all, however, reached the bottom in safety, and away we went to our cabins, to "toilet ourselves a bit," as Edith said, previous to appearing in the cuddy, the tea-bell having rung a short time before.

CHAPTER X.

There were signs and there were tokens,
Known but to the seaman's eye,
Of some far-off tempest raging,
Written on the lurid sky.
Then they furl'd each sail, and lay-to
Till the hurricane had past.
Anon we float on joyous breezes
Gladly through the sunlit air ;
To the haven we are seeking,
To the land so bright and fair.—G. F.

“I HOPE you intend visiting the deck again after tea, Miss Irvin ?” inquired one of my neighbours, Mr. Campbell, a military chaplain. “ You ought to see our gallant ship in her powerless, unadorned state ; it is worth while, I assure you. Do you not know the captain has decided to lay-to,—that, in fact, he is doing so now ?” continued my informant, in answer to my puzzled look.

"Oh, is that what you mean by her powerless state?" I replied. "Yes, oh, yes, Captain Henley told us he purposed laying-to if matters did not mend, which present uncomfortable experiences tell me they have certainly not done."

Mr. Campbell laughed, saying, "Our good old commander seemed to quite enjoy perambulating the vessel, to gloomily inform everybody that he felt sure a tempest was raging somewhere, of a most destructive character to ships; performing all its exploits in an immense circle; seizing upon and ruthlessly dragging into its centre every unlucky thing its mighty arms could lay hold of, and tearing, whirling, and beating them into fragments."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed I, my face, I suppose, betraying the uneasy feelings his words naturally produced in me, for Mr. Campbell added quickly,—

"But do not be frightened; Captain Henley is so thoroughly experienced a seaman, that no danger within the power of man to save us from is at all likely to occur

under the watchful care and skill with which he manages his vessel. The perfect knowledge on nautical points which such a sailor possesses, enables him to be tolerably certain what crisis of the storm he is in for—whether the beginning, the middle, or the end. At present he is of opinion it is at its height somewhere afar off, and therefore his wisest plan is, for the present, to lay-to, whereby he will, in all probability, avoid encountering any of its greater violence."

Several of the passengers were by this time leaving the tea-table, and hurrying off to see what was the state of affairs on deck. Mary Graham came round and joined me, and she and I and Mr. Campbell continued chatting together for some time; after which we accepted his escort on deck to view the poor "Bird of Passage" in, as Edith called it, her unfeathered condition, but first went to our cabins for hats, &c. Mr. Campbell and a Colonel Thornley, my second neighbour at the table, met us in the gangway, and, with their assistance, we reached the deck, and seated ourselves on chairs placed for us

in the stern, that we might examine, to full advantage, the noble ship as it now lay, a Samson shorn of his locks, an eagle with wings cut, a fettered war-horse, straining, plunging, longing to rush headlong into the thick of the battle,—anything, in short, imagination can depict of a restless, enraged, helpless prisoner on the scoffing waters of the great deep.

Few people were, as yet, on deck, and all the sailors were absent, for their presence was now useless. There was nothing more to be done, nothing but to wait patiently and hopefully for results; and so the dethroned vessel, divested of her honours, her attendants, and all her sails,—with the exception of three small ones, too insignificant to be noticeable, placed across each other on the highest mast, and so arranged as to meet the wind at every point, thus entirely checking her advance,—looked dreary and forlorn beyond conception—framed too, as it were, in such a sky and sea! The feeling also of the life or death motive imperatively demanding this melancholy delay on our course, augmented yet more the

depressing appearance of all around. Never, excepting at sea, have I seen the heavens assume, at times, aspects so terrific: this evening masses of inky black clouds lay heaped together like huge rocks close down upon our heads, as if intending to crush ourselves and frail vessel into the depths of the ocean.

Presently, Mrs. Hall and her daughter came from below, and joined our party. I was sorry not to see Sophy Brown with them,—that always made me sorry; and Mary at once asked Mrs. Hall where she was.

“In the cuddy, I believe,” was the answer, in a cold, indignant tone, that plainly declared she did not wish the distasteful subject continued; and so it was dropped.

Poor child! thought I, what with her excitable nature, her deplorable ignorance of all principle of right and wrong, her wayward, unsubdued passions, strange, unguarded manner, and exceeding beauty, if thus left wholly uncared for, what is to become of her?

To Mrs. Graham and myself Sophy was

always polite, good-tempered, and obliging, if not actually submissive to our advice. She quickly perceived the feeling of pity we entertained towards her, poor girl! and, though not rightly understanding nor caring what motive excited it (for she was too rapturously contented with her present position and pursuits to do so), nevertheless—and, perhaps, for the first time in her life—it had the happy effect of calling into action some of the better feelings of her wild, capricious nature, and which she manifested, on all occasions that offered, by every little attention in her power, especially to myself, for whom she was fast conceiving an odd, wayward sort of fancy or affection.

The delicate state of my health attracted her attention, and, notwithstanding the usual heedlessness of her character, excited a kindly interest; so that if she saw me at any time in want of a chair, a book, a pin for my shawl, or any such small matter within her power to procure, away she flew, unasked, and with a sure-footed lightness and activity, with which the erratic movements of the

vessel never seemed to interfere ; and would run back with the required article in her hand, her soft cheeks blooming, and her large brown eyes dancing and flashing like the sunbeams on the wave tops, and cry, in her pretty girlish voice, “Here, Miss Irvin, here is what you wanted, I think, is it not ? Shall I get you anything more ?” and so on. Such cheerful, ready good-nature could not fail to excite my gratitude, and ultimately my liking ; but more particularly so in Sophy’s case, because of her volatile, thoughtless disposition. Continually, Mary Graham and I tried every means of gentle persuasion and advice to steady and improve her wild character ; but the tide of circumstances was so decidedly against us, that as yet no signs of success attended our efforts : it was so dishearteningly difficult—so impossible, in fact—to restrain a nature which every breath of excitement seemed actually to whirl about like gossamer before the wind.

Not many minutes elapsed after Mrs. Hall had seated herself beside us, before the object of my thoughts and pity suddenly appeared

upon deck, alone, and as unimpeded by the pitching and plunging of the imprisoned “Bird of Passage” as if she had merely ascended an ordinary flight of stairs, and was walking in a room. Bounding forward directly she perceived me, and catching hold of my hand, she exclaimed eagerly,—

“Oh, Miss Irvin, you must come down to the cuddy! and you too,” turning to Mrs. Graham. “Edith sent me to tell you. We are such a jolly party below! Oh, do come! there’s going to be a round game of cards, and we want you both to join us. Oh, do come! do come!” jumping about in the exuberance of her mirth, and flashing her dazzling eyes incessantly over the whole party, with mingled expressions too rapid and varied to be defined. “It will do you far more good, dear Miss Irvin, than staying on this dreary, stupid deck!” and the wicked eyes glanced maliciously at Mrs. Hall and her shrinking daughter. “You *must* come!” she continued, trying to pull me up.

I laughed at her vain effort, and Mary smiled, but both declined acceding to her request.

"I think the cool deck infinitely preferable, on so hot an evening," I said, "to sitting in the crowded cuddy. And my further opinion is, you, too, had far better stay here with us; you will not find it dull, believe me. Come, sit on this cushion at my feet—do, dear!" and I endeavoured to draw her down as I spoke.

"Stay here, instead of in the cuddy, where all the fun is going on! Oh, catch me if I do! No, you come with me, dear Miss Irvin and Mrs. Graham. I don't want any one else; and then, you know, you can take care of me!" and she laughed a merry half-derisive laugh.

"I think," interposed Mrs. Hall, in that cold, magisterial tone of reproof, which, upon a mercurial temperament like Sophy Brown's, took very much the same effect as small portions of water administered to a blazing fire would have done,—"I think it would be more becoming in you, young lady, for every reason, to allow others to do as they see fit. You, of all persons, should be the last to attempt interfering with any

one's actions, since you so rebelliously persist in adopting and pursuing your own, whether right or wrong. I must, desire, therefore, you cease these rude importunities."

Sophy's only notice of this reproof was to turn her sparkling face to me, and make a grimace that obliged me to conceal my features from Mrs. Hall's observation and her own.

"You do not ask me to join your party, then, Miss Brown?" inquired Mr. Campbell.

"Oh, all gentlemen are welcome who can make themselves agreeable and useful," replied the girl, glancing quickly, but not cordially, at him.

"In what way shall I be expected to make myself agreeable or useful, as the case may be," he rejoined,—anxious, I could see, to change the subject, not merely in order to save me from further teasing on the part of Sophy, but also to check the threatened outbreak between herself and her angry chaperon.

"Oh," answered Sophy, with a light, scorn-

ful laugh, "if you are so deplorably ignorant as not to know how to make yourself agreeable to ladies, why, in that case you had better stay away,—that's all!"

"Ladies' tastes vary so materially, so perplexingly," said Colonel Thornley,—for Mr. Campbell, looking grave disapproval of Sophy's words and manner, remained silent,—"that attentions of a nature to please one may, perchance, be exceedingly distasteful to another."

"I can tell you this, most gallant Colonel," exclaimed the bold little thing, in her rambling way, "it seldom happens that those men who are the most reverentially polite to young ladies are favourites with them; in fact, as a rule, they are the contrary, no matter what they pretend,—I mean what the propriety girls pretend; and your prudish damsels, I have always seen it, are infinitely more ready to fall in love with a fashionable, worldly-wise man than even the fast ones are; so, in truth, there is one style of manner pleases all."

"You are wonderfully knowing in such

matters for your age!" interposed a young Lieutenant Garston, seated near Alice Hall, and staring, as he spoke, with an expression of disgust and amazement at the beautiful wild face of Sophy Brown.

The latter unblushingly returned his look, and laughed gaily, saying, "What matters, pray?"

Everybody present, excepting Colonel Thornley, who was too old a soldier of the world to be easily disconcerted, was evidently becoming uncomfortable at the strange turn the conversation had taken, for Sophy's features and general bearing had something in them so lawlessly mischievous, that all were filled with apprehension as to what might come next. Mr. Garston seemed either puzzled or unwilling to answer a question evidently asked with wicked intent; and a minute or two of silence followed, during which Miss Sophy became more and more undisguisedly delighted at the unpleasant sensation she was creating. Kneeling on the cushion at my feet, she still held my hand in both her own, and played with and

tossed it about in a reckless, defiant kind of manner; while, from head to foot, her form vibrated, as it were, with dangerous fun and frolic.

I perfectly trembled as I watched her wicked little mouth, dreading what she might say next, and endeavouring, but in vain, to check or silence her.

“Tell me this, Mr. Garston,” said the pert, precocious child at last, “are there any set rules to be learned to teach people to fall in love?”

“Not that I am aware of,” replied the young man, colouring slightly.

“Isn’t the very term always applied to the passion, *fall* in love—isn’t that very term a proof that it is a natural, inadvertent, unpremeditated feeling? People never *fall* intentionally, under any circumstances, do they?”

“I suppose not.”

“Now, look here,” continued Sophy, with increasing vehemence; “I’ll engage that if that little, frigid piece of decorum,—and she actually had the audacity, not-

withstanding Mrs. Hall's imposing presence, to point at her daughter,—“were to quit the parent wing, and to accompany me down to the cuddy, she would fall in love with Captain Beaufort before the evening was over; and that all the more because quite certain her sage mamma would decidedly disapprove her choice.”

While thus speaking, Sophy's eyes flashed alternately from Miss Hall's crimsoning face to the grave, handsome, wondering countenances of Mr. Campbell and Lieutenant Garston. It was a positive relief to us all when Mrs. Hall, rising hastily, her whole face flaming with suppressed wrath, took her daughter's willing hand, saying, in a voice quivering with justifiable indignation,—

“Miss Brown! that your conversation should be of a style that even in the privacy of my own cabin is unendurable, is surely bad enough!”—here Sophy made a disgusted grimace to herself, at the allusion to the cabin,—“but to carry the same on in public, and before gentlemen! You de-

praved child!" continued the incensed lady, with aggravated passion, as the girl's look of sneering defiance met hers; "if you go on as you do, if you do not speak and behave better, I will appeal to Captain Henley, and request him to have you confined to your cabin as a public nuisance, and not allow you again to leave it during the whole voyage; so beware, you bold, rude girl!"

Never shall I forget the change which, quick as lightning, passed over Sophy's countenance at these words,—the sight perfectly electrified me! Her eyes literally blazed, and her cheeks, which before were feverishly red, turned deadly white, as, springing up with a bound, she glared upon Mrs. Hall, saying, in a tone so low, condensed, and altogether unlike her own, that I could scarcely persuade myself it was she who spoke,—

"Do you think you would keep me there?"

Mrs. Hall did not seem or look a timid woman; but she literally shrank back with

an expression of terror, as though suddenly perceiving some wild beast of prey about to spring at her; and, in a greatly subdued voice, replied, "A lock and key would do so, at any rate;" and, accepting Mr. Garston's arm, and still retaining her daughter's hand, left us, and went to another part of the vessel.

Sophy gazed fiercely after them for a moment or two, hesitating, I thought, whether or not to follow and inflict summary vengeance for the insult just offered her; but relieved her feelings instead by a loud, scornful laugh, which had the effect of bringing a couple of cadets to her side, who were watching her from a distance, evidently having followed her from the cuddy. The next instant she again turned to me, every trace of passion having vanished as swiftly as it came, and said, in her own sweet-toned voice,—

"Well, you naughty girl! I am very sorry I cannot persuade you to join us, and you too, dear, kind Mrs. Graham; but now I must go, so good bye for the present: think better of it though, do."

Before descending the stairs, she stopped, and called out,—

“ You ought to return me a vote of thanks, all of you, for having freed you from that incubus ! ” and, laughing wildly, turned, and partly jumped, partly slid down the steps by the balusters—her usual mode of descent,—followed much more cautiously by the two cadets.

CHAPTER XI.

The storm comes in fury ! loud roars the wild blast—
Like a quivering reed, shakes the towering mast.

Then on the bark dashes, proud, dauntless, and free,
Like a gull on the crest of the bright foaming sea.

BRAINARD.

OH ! what a fearful warfare was carried on
between the winds and waves that night !
We just escaped the fury of the tempest
anticipated by Captain Henley, and that
was all. Mrs. Graham and I sat up to-
gether for hours ; but towards morning the
storm began to abate a little, and then we
parted, to try and obtain some rest.
Thoroughly wearied out, I soon fell asleep,
and did not wake until late ; when, to my
extreme satisfaction, I found the day had
opened gloriously. Sunshine everywhere—



bright blue sea—waves crested with sparkling foam, while a light, favourable breeze filled all the fair-weather sails, with which the masts were now crowded. Dressing quickly, I sat near my window, and waited for the breakfast-bell to ring. Oh, how beautiful the view!—such dazzling radiance above and below, with myriads of little flying-fish, mingling, as they rose in the air, with the glittering spray, and scarcely to be distinguished from it.

To-day was Sunday, which made me rejoice the more that the weather had become so pleasant; for, when stormy or wet, “church” was, of necessity, held in the cuddy instead of, as during calm seasons, on the deck. The crowd being very great, in so confined a place the heat and closeness became almost intolerable, and, to my extreme regret, the sailors could not at such times be present, the space not admitting of it; whereas everybody on board could, if they liked, attend when the service was held on deck.

Dear old Jenny—not that she was old, by

the by, but I had a habit of calling persons “old” if I loved them—well, dear old Jenny was looking more than usually discomposed and doleful this morning, notwithstanding the brightness of the weather. She had not slept, poor little soul! the whole night, and moved about my cabin, putting things to rights, with the resigned air and manner of a person mournfully performing a beloved duty for the last time; and conscientiously resolved that, come what might, no feelings should interfere with as rigid and punctilious a discharge of the same as if it were to continue an every-day occurrence. Never was there seen so dismal a contrast as between her face, with its pale cheeks and long thin nose, and the jocund, joyous face of this morning!

“I see your bright eyes are laughing at me for something, you naughty darling,” said the kind creature, smiling affectionately.
“What is it?”

“Now mind this, Jenny,” I answered; “directly you have had your breakfast, come again to this cool cabin, and lay yourself down on my couch, and sleep away until

—oh! until dinner-time, if you can. Do not think of attending church this morning; you are far too tired. Now do, there's a good, dear Jenny, promise me."

"La! Miss Kitty, bless your kind little heart! Do you think I have nothing better to do than go to sleep? Tired! Why, what is to make me more tired than you, I should like to know?"

"Well, a vast deal, I think, seeing that I do nothing all day and night but eat, drink, sleep, and lie on my sofa reading or talking, and sitting or walking on the deck; besides, I had several hours' good sleep after the storm ceased, which you had not. You have, I know, been up ever since daylight, tumbling and struggling about,—first getting my tea, then preparing my warm bath, and doing no end of things, up to the present moment."

"My dear child, you talk as if I had a great house like your papa and mamma's to look after, with four-and-twenty servants in it, instead of this bit of a hole,"—and Jenny made a contemptuous movement of her hand.—"eight feet long by six wide, not an inch

more, I am certain ; and you who give no trouble at all, and are always wanting me to lie down and rest, just as if I was making the voyage for my health and not yours."

I will just conclude this subject by observing, that upon my return from breakfast I found dear Jenny half-sitting, half-lying on my couch, holding a Prayer-book in her hand, from which she had, in preparation for church, been evidently looking out the lessons for the day ; a Bible also rested on her lap, and she, to my great joy, so fast asleep, that the noise I made in coming into the cabin, together with the bewilderment of sounds prevailing over every part of the vessel, did not wake her ; nor even when the cuddy servant, as was the custom, rapped loudly at the door, announcing, in a clear, monotonous voice, "Prayers on deck at half-past ten," did she stir ; but thus remained until I returned at twelve o'clock.

To resume. While Jenny and I were amicably disputing on the subject of sleep, a tap at the door was followed by the entrance of Edith, blooming and wide awake, as if

she had slumbered undisturbed through the whole of the past tempestuous night.

"Well, how are you this sunny morning?" she asked, in a loud, cheerful voice; "and, Jenny, how are you, too, little woman?"

"Very well, I thank you, ma'am," replied the latter. "I need not ask how you are, your looks speak for you."

"They make a very false report then, Mrs. Jenny, and without reference or regard to my last night's adventures and sufferings, for I feel as if I had been beaten all over in the most barbarous manner. I am anything but comfortable this morning, I can tell you! Only think, for the sake of variety, of my having tumbled out of bed last night,—or rather been pitched out,—right down upon the floor, and sent rolling about in all directions, taking every hard thing in my way, as if on purpose—washhand-stand, drawers, &c.!"

"Oh, Edith!" I exclaimed, "how dreadful! Why you might have broken some of your bones!"

"That I might," she cried, "or even my precious neck! Fortunately, however, I did

not, as you perceive ; so I suppose I ought to be very thankful ! Nevertheless, my private opinion is, I have met with more than my fair share of ill-usage, and, in place of being grateful, it will be a long time before I forgive and forget the injuries I have received," shrugging her graceful shoulders as she spoke, and making a distressed face.

" Well, please sit down," I said, for she stood leaning against the drawers ; " I only wonder you can move, much less look so bright and handsome. It will seem very unfeeling, I know, to say so, but really tumbling out of bed seems to agree with you."

Edith laughed heartily, saying, " You good-for-nothing girl, how dare you assert such a thing ! Well, the next storm, I only hope you may be beautified in the same fashion. I assure you, I have done nothing but laugh at myself all the while I have been dressing, thinking what a comical figure I must have cut, rolling about the cabin like a box broken away from its fastenings. Oh ! but you can have no conception

what a horrid wretch—yes, positively a wretch, I can call her nothing less—that Lucy Frere was to me! All night she lay sleeping as undisturbed as if the ship, instead of plunging, tossing, rearing, and prancing, like a wild horse just caught and tethered, was quietly slumbering on a becalmed sea, unruffled as the surface of a lake. Frightened and unhappy, I woke her several times for the sake of companionship; and the only benefits I obtained for my trouble were grumbling complaints at my foolish, unreasonable cowardice, and selfish ill-nature in waking her out of a comfortable sleep. ‘Why, in the name of wonder, did I not go to sleep myself?’ she said. ‘And if I were so absurd as to prefer staying awake, why was she to be worried into doing so also? Was not one fool enough?’ And when I was tossed out—would you believe it?—the only notice she vouchsafed to bestow upon my terror and distress was to say, without offering me the slightest assistance, in a drawling voice, ‘There, that comes of your not lying still—serves you right: now I hope

you are satisfied, and will be content for the rest of the night to leave me in peace.' The heartless wretch ! It was just as much as I could do, I assure you, to withstand the temptation I felt to give her a buffet in the shape of a can of cold water upon her sulky face."

"And serve her richly right, too, that it would !" exclaimed Jenny, in a voice of intense disgust and wrath, for Edith was an especial favourite of my little woman's. "I am sorry you did not do it, that I am ! It would have been a good lesson for her."

"She had better look to it that she does not tempt me so again," answered the amused girl, laughing at Jenny's vehemence. "I will not answer for myself next time."

The breakfast-bell had rung some little while, and we proceeded together to the cuddy. On our way there, Edith suddenly stopped, and, her merry voice changing to one of extreme gravity, said,—

"I wanted much to have a good talk with you this morning, Miss Irvin, upon a subject

which is really beginning to cause me great sorrow; but the presence of your servant deterred me: she always looks so coldly reproving, whenever I say anything she does not like her precious little nursling to hear," and Edith smiled; "but will you give me an audience after breakfast, either in my cabin or yours?"

"What can you have to say, I wonder? However, do not be afraid of Jenny, for you are a prime favourite of hers. Yes, certainly, with pleasure; my cabin, I think, will be best, as most secure from intrusion. One thing I want you to remember—please do not call me Miss Irvin; if you do, I will always respectfully address you as Miss Grant; and how absurd for girls so much together as we are to be so stiff and ceremonious!"

"Oh, no, I forgot! I won't. After breakfast, then?"

"Yes."

"Do you not hate the expression of Major Manvers's insolent eyes when one passes him?" she whispered, as we were entering

the cuddy ; “ I always feel inclined to make a face at him.”

We were in the room now, and approaching the object of Edith’s remarks, therefore I could not answer ; but upon raising my eyes I encountered the bold, dark gaze alluded to, fixed upon Edith and then on myself, changing from one to the other as we passed.

It is amusing to observe how the real character of a girl flashes out upon—to her—such trying occasions. While passing under the fire of his unflinching stare, I was irresistibly impelled to lower my face as much as possible out of sight, and could feel my cheeks burning ; but Edith held back her handsome head with a look and gesture of haughty impatience, though she coloured to the roots of her hair at the same time, feeling indignant beyond expression that a man whom in her heart she so despised should thus presume to stare her out of countenance. As to the gentleman himself, it was evidently a matter of perfect indifference to him in what spirit the “ pretty little dears,” as he familiarly called the young ladies, received

his notice. Their angry blushes, high, haughty manner, downcast, timid looks, or any other pettish demonstration of annoyance, he regarded, I am certain, as so many enhancements of their beauty. He was, in fact, like a bird-fancier, who values and admires fancy pigeons all the more because of their amusing, capricious tempers and tricks ; and I feel certain that had Edith condescended to manifest, as she said, the contempt she felt for him, he would have considered the act as unusually attractive from its very novelty.

CHAPTER XII.

Her mien is flighty, and her gaze
Too well a wandering soul betrays ;
Her full, dark eye at times is bright
With strange and momentary light.—ANON.

Warm, lively, bright, thus in youth's happiest day
The mind was still all there, but turn'd astray ;—
A wandering bark upon whose pathway shone
Fair stars of heaven, except the guiding one !
Oft she smil'd, nay, much and brightly smil'd,
But 'twas a lustre strange, unreal, wild.—MOORE.

MANY of the passengers were absent from the breakfast-table, but that Sophy should be a defaulter, surprised me much. I knew she was at all times so indifferent to the state of the weather as to be either wholly unconscious concerning it, or else in a high state of excited enjoyment at the apprehension manifested by others, and at the various contretemps occasioned by the rolling and

pitching of the ship. I greatly feared, therefore, that she had met with some accident. Nothing, she had frequently declared, should keep her in bed in the morning or awake at night, and certainly this was her first departure from the regular practice of the former part of her assertion.

"I hope," I said, turning to Mr. Campbell, "no accident has befallen my wild little friend, Miss Brown. She is not at the table this morning, an unprecedented circumstance with her; and I cannot help feeling uneasy on her account, though certainly the night was one that might justify anybody's non-appearance at breakfast."

He did not raise his eyes from his plate, as he gravely replied,—

"She was quite safe, and apparently well, when I left the cuddy last night. It was then late, and she was the only lady remaining there, and was talking and laughing with Major Manvers and Captain Beaufort."

"Major Manvers? She assured me she did not know him even to speak to!" I answered.

"When did she say that?"

"Yesterday morning."

"Well, to my knowledge they have not only been on speaking terms but very intimate for the last three or four days."

Having now, as it were, broken the ice, Mr. Campbell continued talking on the same subject, and with increased earnestness, but in lower tones.

"Do you not think if Mrs. Hall were informed of this," he said, "and of Miss Brown's remaining every night in the cuddy with the gentlemen long after the other ladies have retired, it might induce her to be less culpably negligent of her poor young charge than, I am sorry to say, she has hitherto been? Every right-minded person on board is of my opinion—indeed, it admits of no other—that it is impossible any human being could be more unfit to be her own guide and protector than is Miss Sophy Brown. She is clever, and, in a certain way, quick-witted, but, at the same time, totally deficient in just judgment, and most wofully mistaken, ignorant, and bewildered on all

points of right and wrong : in fact, from the style of her remarks, she seems to be entirely unconscious of the meaning and necessity of truth and of—propriety.”

Mr. Campbell was, I could see, very anxious to excite my active interest—he knew I greatly felt for her—in favour of the unhappy Sophy. I was convinced by his manner that much more remained untold than he had liked to mention. My mind became filled with vague and painful apprehensions, and I could not, at the moment, think what answer to make.”

“I am very sorry if I have worried and distressed you, Miss Irvin,” he said, kindly ; “I did not intend that, for you are not strong enough to bear it; indeed, why should you be annoyed ? I will speak to Mrs. Hall myself; as a clergyman, it is my duty to do so.”

He then changed the conversation, and talked so agreeably on different subjects, that I was greatly cheered and amused. Amongst the rest, he gave me a most ludicrous account of the mishaps which had

befallen persons and things the evening before.

After breakfast, Edith again joined me. She hesitated for a second or two on my proposing to go at once to Sophy's cabin, and ascertain the reason of her not appearing that morning.

"She will not tell you," Edith said, in a tone of voice that startled me, and made me look at her. "Mad though some think her, she will be wise enough not to betray herself on those points."

"What points?" I asked, anxiously.

"Well, come and see her, if you like," continued Edith, moving quickly on; "I will tell you all afterwards."

Sophy's cabin was on the lower deck, and thither we accordingly proceeded. She was sitting before a small table near the window, eating her breakfast, when we entered. The same ayah who attended Mrs. Hall was also engaged to wait upon Sophy, but she was not then present. It is impossible to conceive anything in a wilder or more confused state than were both Sophy and her cabin.

It was as if the storm of the previous night had turned the whole place upside down. Still undressed, she wore merely a night-robe and dressing-gown, the latter thrown slightly over her shoulders ; her feet were bare ; and as for her hair, I could imagine nothing else than its having been tempest-tossed throughout the whole night. She never put on a cap of any kind ; she hated them, she said, they were so hot !—and certainly her luxuriant brown tresses presented ample testimony of the unrestrained liberty they enjoyed. Such a reckless, untidy-looking person and abode I had never before seen. One stocking lay to the right, the other to the left, and the shoes appeared to be hunting after them. Various articles of clothing lay scattered about the floor, and the unmade bed was lying off and on the sofa in a very forlorn way. Sophy's face was deadly pale, and a dark line under her eyes increased their brightness in an unpleasant degree.

“ We are come to look you up, young lady ; to see what is the cause of your not showing yourself in the cuddy this morning,”

began Edith, in a cold, significant tone of voice.

A faint tinge of colour flitted over Sophy's cheeks and brow.

"You are not ill, dear, I hope?" I added, gently, for a strong feeling of commiseration arose in my heart at sight of her forlorn, uncared-for condition and evidently fragile constitution.

"Oh, no, thank you!" she answered, hurriedly; "there is nothing the matter with me. I am quite well, only very lazy, after having been played at pitch and toss with all the night, that is all; so I did not take the trouble to dress."

"So it seems," observed Edith, scornfully, and slowly examining the poor child from head to foot.

Sophy was at first singularly quiet and subdued, her whole manner and bearing full of shame and discomfiture. I could not bear to see her so, nor comprehend the meaning of such a change, though I knew it would not last long, whatever might be the cause; and even as Edith again spoke,

her habitual composure and audacity began to return.

"I have often heard you boast, Miss Sophy," said Edith, "that storm or calm were all alike to you—that no movement of the vessel, no roughness of the winds or waves, could prevent your sleeping! Is it not so?"

"The ayah told me you rolled out of bed last night, Miss Edith," observed Sophy, glancing rapidly at her. "Did you ever make any such little excursion before?"

"I do not see what that has to do with my question," replied Edith, coldly.

"It has a great deal. Look here, it is the first storm which last night ejected you from your bed—it is the first storm which this morning kept me in mine."

"Listen, Sophy!" exclaimed Edith, with increasing anger, and fixing her eyes sternly upon her. "You know the storm had nothing to do with your lying in bed this morning! Oh, Sophy! Sophy! I grieve from my heart for you! Oh, that one so very young could

be so depraved ! And I liked you so much too ! I cannot conceive—”

“ I do not care !—I do not care ! ” cried the now roused, excited girl, glaring at Edith like an enraged panther “ Life is worth nothing except for pleasure. Let those who choose spend it in sacrifices and restrictions : I will not ! I would rather die ! yes, die this moment ! A thousand times rather ! ”

She panted so heavily, and looked so wild and fierce, that it really made me shudder to see and hear her.

“ Oh, hush, hush, dear ! ” I said, softly, smoothing her ruffled hair with my hand the while ; “ I cannot bear to hear you speak in that way ; you know I cannot.”

She unconsciously took my hand in hers, clasping it convulsively and in silence for a minute or two.

“ I cannot see what it is to Edith anything I like to do,” she went on to say. “ I wish people would leave me alone. I never interfere with them.”

Edith stood leaning against the wall,

wholly unmoved at sight of the storm of passion her words had awakened.

"There is no fear but that people will quickly enough leave you alone," she answered. "In a short time, not a modest woman or girl will speak to you. See whether my words do not come true!"

"I will make them speak to me if I choose!" said Sophy.

"Well, Kate, I think we had better leave this young lady to finish her breakfast and dress for church, if it is her intention to attend; we are only wasting our time by standing talking here," said Edith, moving, as she spoke, towards the door.

Sophy for a second or two laid her soft, young cheek on my hand, in a caressing manner, peculiar to her; then kissing it, drew her own away, and, with all her recovered hardihood, flashing her brilliant eyes after Edith, exclaimed, "Good-bye to you, until we meekly meet upon our knees!"

The latter, momentarily surprised, turned round towards her, when Sophy instantly made a grimace, placing her hands—the

thumb of one to the little finger of the other—in the manner of rude boys, when bent upon particularly insulting each other.

Edith coloured deeply, and, with sparkling eyes, advanced a step into the room, but I caught her hand in mine, and led her out, saying, “Never mind, never mind, dear Edith! do not let us waste any more time; I want much to talk to you; so come away,” and, without further dispute, we quitted the cabin.

“Poor little creature! she is decidedly mad!” I said.

“Mischievous little wretch!” answered Edith, passionately.

CHAPTER XIII.

And who art thou, that, in the littleness
Of thine own selfish purpose, wouldest set bounds
To the free current of all noble thoughts
And generous action, bidding its bright waves
Be stayed, and flow no further!—MRS. HEMANS.

I shuddered through my inmost frame—
A tale so full of woe!

DISLIKING the idea of Lucy Frere's presence during our conversation, I proposed holding it in my cabin; but, upon finding poor Jenny, as I said, fast asleep on the sofa, we kept to our first intention, and adjourned to that of the cousins. Lucy was still lying in bed, and, as usual, reading a novel and biting her hair, for which senseless and ungainly purpose she had pulled it down from under her cap. Naturally very indolent, every excuse was taken advantage of that favoured her inert disposition, and especially

lying in bed in the morning to have her breakfast—that evil and so greatly loved habit of lazy people.

A cold and distant greeting having passed between herself and me, Edith and I seated ourselves near the window.

“What a lazy thing you are, Lucy!” exclaimed my impetuous friend, looking down upon her with an expression of unmitigated disgust:—be it remembered that Edith was still smarting from the recollection of last night’s unkindness.

“Do you think so?” she answered, in the most provokingly quiet voice.

“I should think I did,” replied her cousin. “The whole of last night you slept soundly, despite all the noise and confusion going on within and without, and yet you are still in bed, your hair tumbling about, a worthless novel in your hand, and the untidy remains of an enormous breakfast before you—in short, a complete impersonation of Padiana’s lazy, lolloping love,—the latest and most amusing picture of Ireland behind the scenes.”

"Well, have you completed your sketch and comparison?" asked the imperturbable Lucy; "because when you have—but pray do not let me hurry you—perhaps you will kindly direct your agreeable conversation to Miss Irvin, and then I shall be able to continue my reading."

Edith looked inclined to retort again, but thought better of it, and, turning scornfully away, entered at once into the subject she was desirous to speak upon.

"Well, Miss Kitty," she began, recovering her good-humour and bright smiling look, "the reason of my wishing to speak to you is this,"—and her manner again became grave, as she continued talking,—“I think it perfectly shocking—and, oh! so would you, if you only knew all!—the way that mad little Sophy Brown is going on! Mrs. Hall cannot be aware of half her wickedness, I feel certain, or she would never allow it to continue; and I am so afraid of doing some terrible harm if I told her, that in fact I know not what to do, or how to put a stop to it. Her conduct, you know, is at all times

bold with men—strangely bold for so young a thing ; but last night really she set all decorum at defiance ! It is so sad, I hardly like telling you, you will be so vexed ! ”

“ Why do you then ? ” asked Lucy, with a low, sneering laugh, the sound of which seemed to act on Edith’s warm temperament like spirits thrown on fire.

“ I am not speaking to you, Lucy ! ” she exclaimed passionately ; “ I know too well the unhappy state of your principles, ever to expect either attention or sympathy from you on such a subject as the present one.”

“ No, cast not thy stone, &c., ” replied the profane girl.

Edith did not condescend to take further notice, but bit her lip angrily as she continued,—“ Last night Sophy acted as if perfectly demented, and looked so too. Her conversation and behaviour to Major Manvers and Captain Beaufort were so regardless of all propriety, positively I could not bear sitting near her ; and when, at half-past nine o’clock, the ladies were leaving the cuddy, she would not move, though well knowing that in a

short time the lamp would be put out, and she would then be obliged to make her way to her cabin in the dark as best she could, probably assisted there by that horrid Major Manvers; and, though her ayah would be awaiting her in the cabin, still how improper such a thing would be! All this she knew, and yet chose to remain! Mrs. Hall and her daughter never sit long in the cuddy in the evening, and, consequently, were then gone, or it is to be hoped she might have interfered. I begged Mrs. Irskew to go and speak to her. I wanted to get her away before she exposed herself any further, for, encouraged by the gentlemen, she was drinking so much negus, that I felt sure she must at last tumble under the table or go raving mad."

"I really cannot imagine what concern it could have been of yours," observed the unamiable Lucy, "whether she did tumble under the table or went raving mad; you are not her guardian, and—"

"There, that will do," cried Edith, knitting her brows scornfully. "And besides," she continued, turning again to me, "I

cannot tell why, but that poor child possesses something so irresistibly attractive and winning about her, that I cannot help liking her; and then she is so young, and looks so—and is so—*very* pretty! And as to her being mad, I am half-convinced that it is only folly; she is infinitely more wise and clever than the majority of people on board. No, the sad fact is, that her education and former associates have so polluted her mind and heart, which are by nature disposed to be wild and lawless, that any change in her character for the better is a thing, I fear, past hope, turned adrift as the poor *thing* is now, and I suppose will be for the rest of her life."

"Oh, Edith! if you remember, what a strange, unsettled expression marks her features!—how unlike her every word, look, and act are to other girls of her age!—oh, you cannot *think* her sane! Poor little thing, some melancholy fate awaits her, be sure of that!"

Lucy's low, scoffing laugh fell upon my ear, and sent a rush of hot, angry blood to my cheeks and brow.

"Well, Kate, I do not know," replied Edith, "it may be as you say, but I assure you very few are of that opinion—I mean, very few believe her mad. Mrs. Bouverie told Lucy—Oh, by the by, have you observed lately what a charming flirtation is going on between that beautiful little fat man and Lucy?"

"Miss Frere!" I cried, in utter amazement.

"I thought you would be surprised. Yes,—Lucy! Do not you admire her taste?" And Edith shrugged her shoulders wonderingly.

"I do, indeed;" and the very idea set me off laughing. I could not help it, when I remembered the tub-like style of the little moon-faced man. As for the young lady herself, she so managed to pull her hair over her face as perfectly to conceal it, thereby proving that more lay beneath the accusation than had yet met the eye of her accuser.

Edith also laughed heartily, and presently Lucy said, in a quiet voice, a little less steady than usual,—

"I shall feel obliged to you both to confine your very astute observations and amiable ridicule to Miss Brown and the gentlemen, and leave me alone."

This remark delighted Edith ; she was glad that at last something had power to upset her cousin's heartless, selfish equanimity ; and to punish her yet more, Edith and myself, with secret understanding, further expressed our great amusement.

"Well, that charming little fat man," and Edith again laughed with pardonable malicious glee, "gave it as his sage opinion that Miss Sophia Brown had more sense in her little finger than Mrs. Hall and her daughter both put together. But, to return to what I was first saying. I begged Mrs. Irskew to speak to her, which she instantly did, and I must say very kindly and earnestly, too : she tried every argument to induce the frantic girl to leave the cuddy with us, but all to no purpose,—she would not stir ; and then I went and spoke to her. I could not bring myself to go away without making one last effort to bring her to reason.

Perhaps so much trouble and fuss on my part were uncalled for!" continued Edith, blushing. "Most certainly they were, like everything else, totally thrown away. I cannot imagine what possessed the girl! She was in such uncontrollable spirits, just like a creature freshly caught out of the woods, and her cheeks and eyes were flaming with excitement. Well, I reasoned, or strove to reason, with her to make her more rational; I threatened her with Captain Henley and Mrs. Graham; I named you, and any one I could remember for whom she entertained one spark of regard, but I might as successfully have argued with the wind. Had she been by herself at the moment, it is just possible I might have persuaded her; as it was, prompted by that mischief-loving Captain Beaufort, and silently encouraged by the expressive looks of Major Manvers, all the attention she paid to my remonstrances was to turn them into ridicule; and she and Captain Beaufort laughed so much and so noisily, that I could scarcely make myself heard. Oh, I got into such a passion! I dare

say I had no right to do so, but really I could not stand their folly, and Major Manvers gravely and coolly told me, just as if he were making the most friendly offer in the world, I need not give myself any distress about Miss Brown, as he would see her carefully into her cabin, and take every precaution that she should meet with no accident in the meanwhile! Only conceive the impertinence of such a speech; and even to speak to me at all, knowing, as he well does, that I have shunned acquaintance with him ever since I came on board! Sophy, the little wretch! burst into peals of merriment, and Captain Beaufort seemed quite unable to help joining her. Oh, I was so angry! And yet more to increase my wrath, what do you think Major Manvers actually had the audacity to tell me? That it was particularly becoming to my style of beauty to be in a passion! I know not how much more he might have added, but with a sickening feeling of disgust I walked out of the cuddy; indeed, it was high time to do so, for I was the only lady, excepting Sophy Brown, remaining there."

"Well, dear Edith, you acted with great kindness," I said. "I see not what more you could have done; and if Sophy is determined to go to destruction, neither you, nor I, nor indeed any one, I am afraid, will be able to stop her in her wild career; we can only hope she will never run beyond mere imprudence."

"Oh, I hardly like to tell you how it all ended, Kitty! I so fear—I so—"

"What a dear little, self-sacrificing creature it is, to be sure!" said Miss Frere, sarcastically. "In spite of distress and fears, she is determined to tell, cost what it may."

"I tell you what, Lucy, if you laugh any more at me in that way, I will give you a good box on your ear! you unfeeling, unprincipled girl!" cried the exasperated Edith, her handsome face reddening with passion. "Why cannot you read your book and let me alone?"

"Passion is particularly becoming to your style of beauty, Miss Grant," mimicked Lucy, in Major Manvers's exact tone of voice and grave, cool manner.

Neither Edith nor I could restrain ourselves from laughing, although the former was full of anger and annoyance at the disagreeable interruptions of her cousin.

Recovering her gravity, she turned to me, and said, "Mrs. Hall's ayah told ours that she was lying on some sails not far from Sophy's cabin, waiting to help her to undress, and half asleep—(I suppose you know those black people make their sleeping places about the ship, where they can find the warmest corner; they never have cabins or regular beds like Christian beings)—and after all had gone to their cabins, she saw Major Manvers and Sophy coming along the passage—and, oh Kate! is it not shocking to think of?—actually that mere child was, she declared, so intoxicated as to be half stupid and unable to walk without support. Major Manvers was almost obliged to carry her to her cabin, where he consigned her to the care of the ayah, desiring her, with wonderful consideration for him, not to leave her all night. She was utterly helpless; the woman got her clothes off as best she could;

and then the unfortunate little reprobate fell asleep, and did not wake till late this morning, too late to dress for breakfast, which was the reason of her non-appearance at table ! Oh, is it not dreadful ? What will she be fit for by the end of the voyage, and what can we do about it ? Mrs. Hall, cold, hypocritical woman, declares she will have nothing to do with her, and that she may go to destruction if she is so determined.”

Just then the little church-bell sounded, and I rose to go, saying, “ Well, we cannot talk any more on this subject at present.”

“ No, we must settle ourselves for the exhibition on deck,” replied Edith. “ Tap at my door as you and Mrs. Graham pass by, will you, Kitty, and let me join you ?”

“ I will, dear,” I said, as I left the cabin.

CHAPTER XIV.

. All things around
Are full of prayer ! The very foam which tips
Yon snowy waves is bright with adoration !
The ocean murmurs forth praise, and all near and far
Is a wide altar ; while the faintest sound
Is vibrating with prayer. Sad that profanation
Reaches the thoughts, while thus to ears and eyes
Nature her music and her prayer supplies.

IT was rather late before we ascended to the deck, and the majority of the congregation had already assembled. Mrs. Graham and I had previously sent up our easy ship-chairs, which, being recognized, remained unoccupied. At sight of Edith, Captain Beaufort immediately sprang forward to place her a chair next to ours, and a deep blush of gratification passed over her face at this prompt attention of the handsome

soldier. There was always much that was particularly agreeable to me in this gathering together of a little crowd of human beings to worship before the throne of the great Creator of the universe. What a narrow space we seemed to fill! what a speck, a tiny speck, was our large and noble vessel on the bosom of the boundless deep!—an atom, that a single breath of the Most High could, in an instant, have swept from off the face of the ocean as if it had never been; and yet, in miniature, was this atom an ever-moving, restless world, full of good and evil—of sin, passion, love, and hatred,—of virtue and vice,—of all that was most noble, all that was mean; yes, all. Every pure and impure feeling breathed throughout this little world's frail fabric—above, below, amongst rich and poor, man and woman. It was ruled by laws of its own, reigned over by a king little short of absolute in power. But, after all, I am merely repeating what every one knows concerning a vessel—so to return to my narrative. Not only was the sight of this ocean Sabbath congregation

pleasant to the feelings, but exceedingly attractive also to the eye. Forty-two passengers were on board, the majority of whom were ladies, whose ages, with some half-dozen exceptions, ranged between sixteen and twenty. Every one, except Sophy, Lucy, and two or three gentlemen, was present on deck at the prayers this bright and glorious morning.

Around the spot kept clear for the clergyman, in the centre of the ship, chairs were placed in a double half circle, for the convenience of the passengers. At the end facing the open part of the circle, sitting three or four deep, were the sailors, a picture of cleanliness and neatness; their heads bare, and a grave, earnest look on their weather-beaten faces; and, in front of them, a long row of fine, spirited boy midshipmen.

Fortunately, we had two clergymen on board—my acquaintance, Mr. Campbell, and a zealous missionary, Mr. Russell. The service each Sunday was shared between them; one officiating in the morning and the other in the evening. I could not help

thinking that the scene on deck this morning was more than usually pretty. The ladies had now, with few exceptions, become tolerably well accustomed to the sea air, and their novel mode of life; and had recovered their good looks, indeed more than recovered, for most of them were daily improving in appearance, under the combined influence of invigorating ocean breezes, and the easy, cheerful, free-from-care state of existence enjoyed on board. The variety, therefore, of blooming young faces,—presenting every phase of English, Irish, and Scotch beauty, clearly disclosed beneath the slight and becoming shade of the small round hats then just beginning to be the fashion,—contrasted with each other in so attractive a style, that I really found it difficult during the service to keep my eyes and thoughts from forsaking their higher duty, and playing truant amongst the bright, black, brown, blue, and grey eyes flashing in all directions around me. From the heat of the weather, no thicker material than muslin could be worn; and the dresses of every hue, with

the bright coloured feathers in the hats, formed altogether a prettier and a livelier picture than it will ever again fall to my lot to look upon. Often the idea crossed my mind, how like the whole thing was to my pretty garden at home, my own especial property, when filled in summer-time with its wilderness of flowers.

To Edith's and my own great annoyance, Major Manvers and his cousins were seated close to us. The girls, of course, we did not mind, but, to Edith especially, our proximity to the Major was very unpleasant; not only on account of his last night's behaviour in the cuddly, but because of his rude habit of staring. Edith whispered to me, while her cheek and eye kindled, "I declare, Kitty, that odious man's presence so near us this morning has done away with all the pleasure I had hoped for from Mr. Campbell's preaching."

As for the gallant Major himself, he looked and was as perfectly unconcerned as though nothing had ever occurred; and placing his chair so as to command a full view of our

faces, gazed, I really think, with more than his usual amount of effrontery. At first, Edith and I were most worried, and then, to my surprise, he devoted his attention almost entirely to the sad, sweet, down-bent face of Mary Graham.

"How very odd," I thought, "so decidedly eclipsed as she is—as every other girl on board would be—placed in such close proximity to beauty so rare and dazzling as Edith's!"

A truly incomprehensible thing to woman is man's opinion of the individual attractions of her sex!

Mrs. Graham did not perceive this decided diversion of his notice in her favour, or, if she did, it made not the slightest impression upon her; her attention was undividedly given to the approaching service, and she occupied the intermediate space of time in reading some hymns in her Prayer-book.

And now Mr. Campbell came on deck, and took the place prepared for him before a kind of temporary pulpit-desk, whereon were deposited the large Bible and Prayer-book.

After rising from his knees, he gazed earnestly and anxiously towards the spot where our brave tars were seated. He appeared to me to be noting whether any had absented themselves who ought to be there. Mr. Campbell was a truly good Christian minister. The eternal welfare of his fellow creatures was the one great end and aim of his existence. I knew that from the first day of his coming on board he had been unsparing in his exertions amongst the sailors ; and his fine benevolent countenance, his disinterested motives, his frank and kindly manner, won for him a cordial opening into the unprejudiced and easily impressible hearts of these poor men. He said that a long voyage was an opportunity for instructing and reforming the sailors which no clergyman ought to neglect. The occasion was one whose advantages could not be too much appreciated ; during the longest ministerial life one so favourable might not again occur. Free from all allurement to the committal of those many vices to which, while on land, they are unhappily so prone, sailors are, when at sea,

in the most desirable position to receive the good seed into their souls. Readily accessible, and generally grateful for the attention of a minister, he may well hope to make upon many of them a lasting impression ; awaking their better feelings, strengthening their principles, and preparing them to resist the temptations that assail them as soon as they set foot on shore.

I have given this brief extract from a long conversation Mr. Campbell held with me on the subject ; for strange as the declaration will no doubt seem, and perhaps little credible, the foregoing, though a matter of deep importance, is, I regret to say, greatly overlooked by the clergy.

I have made four voyages to the East and back. Two or three clergymen were each time on board, some of them unquestionably good and pious men, and yet, excepting in the case of Mr. Campbell, not one troubled himself to visit and instruct the sailors—in more than one instance seventy or eighty in number ; although in one vessel in which I sailed, her commander, Captain Tait,

openly expressed the wish that one or other of the three divines then on board would, as frequently as they could, take opportunities of reading and talking on sacred subjects to the seamen and midshipmen. But none did so.

CHAPTER XV.

Bright was her eye, and gay her mien ;
Her spirit kind—but mad I ween.

Flushed with youth, her looks impart
Each fine feeling as it flows.

THE service concluded, Mrs. Graham returned to her cabin. I thought she seemed more than usually depressed and silent this morning, and proposed, as soon as I had taken a short walk with Edith on the deck, to go down and endeavour to cheer her. It was intolerably hot to-day, and, after taking a few turns, we were obliged to give up all attempt at exercise during the mid-day heat.

“ Well, we must e’en make the best of it,” said Edith gaily, as she took off her hat, for the double purpose of cooling her head and fanning her flushed face. “ Let us stand

here for a little while, and amuse ourselves with watching the porpoises who are frisking about with as much elegance and lightness as a set of fat young pigs; they are swimming with the wind I am glad to see, for, according to the sailors, it predicts a continuance of fine weather—or—no, indeed, I am not certain if it was not *bad* weather; can you remember Kate?" and she laughed at her own forgetfulness.

"Really, I am sorry to say I am quite as forgetful on the subject as you are, though I did know once. However, the first opportunity that offers I am resolved to obtain nautical information on that point and on several others which it would be a shame to go back to England without knowing—that is," I added, sighing involuntarily, "if I ever do go back again."

"Go home, again? That you will, and as strong and well as I am," answered Edith, in a decided, cheerful voice, which carried a power of conviction with it there was no resisting. "But, Kitty, to return to what we saw and said this morning, did you ever

before enter the dormitory of such a strangely beautiful, reckless-looking little vagabond as Sophy Brown? She was bad enough when first she came on board; but now—positively she is not fit to be spoken to! What is to be done about her? poor frantic little thing! Must we sit down quietly—*sit* quietly!—I mean tumble about quietly, and let her—”

“Yes, let her walk in the light of the fire, and in the sparks wherewith she hath encompassed herself,” interrupted a mocking young voice close behind Edith, while a pair of arms were thrown around her, and a bright fair face brimming over with mischief and frolic leaned forward, and half-apologetically, half-defiantly, looked up into hers.

“And do you remember also the ending to that walk, Sophy?” I asked.

“Oh, that will depend upon the way I go,” she replied, with a reckless laugh which grated most unpleasantly on my ear.

“No, it will not do so,” I gravely answered. “It is true the ways are many and various, but all lead to the same place. God declares,

‘This shall ye have at my hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow !’ ”

“ Ah, well !

Such is the fate of our life’s early promise,
So passing the spring-tide of joys we have known,
The waves that we danced on at morning ebb from us,
And leave us to lie on the bleak shore alone,”

sang the incorrigible girl, in a voice whose sweet, wild pathos brought the tears into my eyes, notwithstanding the objectionable tone of levity which marred its beauty. Catching Edith’s hand in hers, she laid her cheek upon it for a second, and warmly kissing the soft white fingers, she moved restlessly about, saying, while still retaining the hand in hers, “ Did parson Campbell give you a long sermon this morning ?” Then, stopping suddenly in her graceful but petulant evolutions, she turned her flashing eyes upon me, with an indefinable expression, before which I mentally shrank.

“ No,” I said, “ only a quarter of an hour. Why did you not come up and hear it ?”

“ Oh,” she replied, scornfully, “ do you think a sermon would ever bring me on

deck? I hate sermons! There is nothing-clergymen ever tell me that I do not know already quite as well as they do. Do you not hate sermons and lectures, and all the rest of it, Miss Grant?" continued the thoughtless girl.

"No," answered Edith, who had stood looking at her with serious, reproving eyes, "I never hate what is good; there is neither sense nor justice in it."

"I hate good people, too," persisted Sophy; "they are always selfish, uncharitable, and self-righteous."

Edith and I involuntarily laughed at this questionable declaration as regarded ourselves, and Sophy, not at first perceiving the cause of our mirth, joined in with great glee; then quickly checking herself, added,

"I mean, you know, I hate them as a rule, because, as a rule, they are a most disagreeable, quarrelsome class of people, and that you must both allow; but there are, as we all know, exceptions to every rule, and Miss Irvin is one"—glancing furtively at me from under her long, silken

eyelashes, while a softened expression stole over her features, imparting so attractive a character to her beauty that it made her almost seem like another person. "I like her because, though she is good, it does not leave her heart hard and unkind. She is so good-natured, no one would know that she was not the wickedest person possible."

This strange and doubtful compliment sent Edith off into a genuine fit of laughter, that was far too infectious to be withheld. I also joined in heartily, and it was some minutes before we recovered our composure. Sophy, delighted at Edith's good humour towards her, danced about right joyously, holding the hand of the latter, and refusing to release it. Edith and I felt that we were both doing wrong in thus foolishly giving way to mirth, when, in truth, the poor child was more to be wept over than laughed at; but we were of an age when as small a matter had power to excite our amusement as our sorrow; and even in the most womanly girls, with grave precociousness of sense beyond their years, nature will break

out at times, and often, unfortunately, just on the most reprehensible occasions.

"I love you, too, Edith, though you are not so good as Kate Irvin," exclaimed Sophy, stopping and looking earnestly at her.

"Do you?" replied the latter, recovering her seriousness, and meeting the girl's restless glance with the same expression that she might have bestowed on an offending child of six years old.

"Yes, I like you all the better for not being *very* good." Then acting upon a sudden impulse, to which she was often prone, she threw her arms round Edith, and laid her face on her bosom.

The fine countenance of Miss Grant bespoke an inward conflict between very opposing feelings, as for a minute she gazed down on the beautiful upturned eyes which sought hers. There was, when she chose it, a singular fascination in the words and acts of this wayward young creature, which was, perhaps, all the more irresistible on account of the union of the apparent innocence and

simplicity of the child with the bewitching yet deceptive graces of a lovely woman. I can only say, as regards myself, I felt it as unreasonable to attempt to view her actions in the same clear light as those of other people, as to do so in the case of an acknowledged lunatic or a child.

"Oh, yes, I do like you, dear Miss Grant; indeed, indeed I do!" cried Sophy, vehemently, the tears rushing to her eyes. "The division is not so wide between you and me as between Miss Irvin and me."

How the fair and haughty Edith might have responded to this speech, and submitted to be thus brought almost to a level with the "reckless little vagabond," as she called her, I cannot tell; for at that moment Captain Beaufort crossed from the opposite side, where, unperceived by Sophy, he had watched us for some time; and coming close behind the latter, asked,—

"What is not so wide, Miss Brown?"

At the sound of his voice, a crimson flush swept over her features, a dark frown contracted her brow, and for an instant she

seemed struggling with feelings I did not then understand ; but youthful shame triumphing over her girlish heart, she affected not to hear him ; and releasing her hold of Edith, caught up one of her hands instead, and laying her cheek upon it, pretended to caress it.

Pitying her distress, whatever the cause, I drew Captain Beaufort's attention to myself by answering,—

“ Our conversation was partly upon comparative degrees of goodness. Miss Brown declared that she hated all kinds of sermons, and good people in general, by which latter we understood her to mean religious people ; and in discussing her sadly mistaken opinions, we were arriving, I think, at clearer views of the case when—”

“ Oh, religious people ! ” interrupted the Captain, shrugging his shoulders ; “ I would as soon thrust my hand into a hive of bees as venture to breathe a word against them, surrounded as we poor sinners are by so large a swarm, and without the possibility of escape ! ”

His look was fixed on Edith, and she replied to it by saying, gravely,—

“But why should you speak disparagingly of them?”

“If the ranks of good people were filled only by Miss Grants and Miss Irwins”—bowing to me with his disagreeable cynical smile—“I could not say a word against them,” he answered; “I should, on the contrary, try to fit myself to become one of their corps, especially if reasonable hopes were held out to me that, some day, I might be generously permitted to share in command.”

I am giving a portion of this conversation, not because it is worth inserting, but to show, as it in part does, that already the ingenuous heart of Edith was becoming interested in this thoroughly unprincipled man. She evidently understood,—as who would not?—that a *double entendre* was couched in these words; for with no displeased expression she turned aside her handsome face to conceal the deep blush dyeing her cheeks.

“Miss Grant will never be a hypocrite,

at least," exclaimed Sophy, suddenly, and losing at once the fit of bashfulness which had come upon her. "She is as honest-hearted as you are the contrary," glancing vindictively at Captain Beaufort, "and is certain to go to Heaven."

"I have not the slightest doubt she will," said the gallant Captain.

Edith observed, confusedly, "that she did not think they either of them knew what they were talking about, and were evidently wholly ignorant of the real nature of true religion, or they would not give utterance to such light opinions on so serious a subject."

Captain Beaufort laughed, and drew nearer to her, saying, in a lower voice, "I am afraid you do not entertain a very exalted idea of my powers of discrimination, fair lady."

I felt very angry. I know I had no right to do so, but I could not help it—to see the bold manner in which that man stared into her face, and the unresisting way her usually proud and rebellious spirit submitted to it. With still averted looks she answered,—

"I think that people who are themselves destitute of religion are, for that reason, quite incapable of judging of it in others."

"Waiving allusion to the possible injustice of such an imputation upon myself," replied Captain Beaufort, pleased by the ready, off-hand style in which Edith brandished the argumentative cudgel, "it would hardly be fair to assert that a man was no judge of the merits of a poet because he was not gifted with that delightful talent himself. Or of a painter or sculptor, because he could wield neither the brush nor the chisel."

"I think it would be perfectly fair to assert," said Edith, smilingly persisting in her opinions, "that if a man disliked poetry and painting so much as never willingly to read a line of one or look at a single production of the other, he could not be considered competent to decide upon the merits of either."

"My own deficiencies are many and great, I know," answered Captain Beaufort, gazing earnestly at her. "They do not, however, prevent my clearly perceiving, and warmly

:admiring, Miss Grant's beauty and excellencies."

She laughed slightly, and said, blushing, "If you feel any respect for religion, why—excepting this morning—have you always absented yourself from the prayers?"

I greatly wished Edith would cease this unprofitable argument. She was, to my extreme vexation, proving to this keen-sighted man; by every word and look she bestowed upon him, the too favourable impression he had already made upon her: the last unlucky question was especially unfortunate in that way. The very interest she displayed in regard to Sophy, I now felt sure, principally arose from the intimacy she had seen existing between him and that poor, wild, little creature. Had Edith possessed one friend on board the "Bird of Passage" endued with sufficient right of influence and control over her to prevent such an undesirable acquaintanceship from advancing further, it might even now have been put a stop to. Better still, had she, as well as many others, been properly protected,

a familiar intimacy of so objectionable a kind would never have been commenced. It is perfectly easy to prevent such, and for persons to select companions of whom they approve, both for themselves and for those who are under their charge, and to keep apart from others.

Captain Beaufort was an openly professed infidel, and, by some on board, well known to be of a worthless character. He certainly made no pretence to reformation on one point or the other; probably he had not as yet seen a necessity for it. Edith's remark told at once upon her experienced admirer: he drew yet nearer to her side, saying, in a voice full of significance,—

“ And may I really be allowed to believe, Miss Grant, that either the absence or presence of my unworthy self excites in you the least observation or gentle concern ? ”

To my relief, Edith, whose modesty and good sense rebelled against the folly committed, replied in proud haste, and drawing back the while, her whole face flushing,—

“ No, I do not mean that ! You mistake

me! I simply meant—I simply remarked your absence as I should that of any other passenger, who made it a rule never to be present on an occasion when none who thought as they should do would ever willingly absent themselves."

What there was in fair Edith's countenance and words which gratified the gentleman I know not, but it was easy to see that he had conceived an opinion not lightly to be shaken, admitted hopes not readily to be displaced. To a worldly practised eye like his, poor guileless Edith's truthful brow, her honest, beautiful grey eyes, her varying complexion, and flexible, well-formed mouth, were as the leaf of a book, every sentiment, every idea of which he could read without an effort. He affected, however, immediately to consider himself as presumptuously mistaken; lowered his long, dark eyes, looked exceedingly contrite, and begged her pardon, without saying or seeming to know for what; and it was a great relief to my patience, which was fast deserting me, when Sophy abruptly cut short this foolish and,

to poor Edith, dangerous piece of acting by saying,—

“ Captain Beaufort, do not you agree with me in hating long sermons? But I know you do, for you always say you hate everything appertaining to a parson, even to his necktie.”

The gentleman laughed in a mingled tone of levity and discomfiture; but, disregarding the latter observation, which Sophy had spoken with marked emphasis, glancing at Edith, he replied to the question only,—

“ You might, I think, improve upon that inquiry, Miss Brown: put it, for instance, in this way—‘ Do I not dislike a long, bad sermon?’ I should then unhesitatingly say, ‘ Yes, I do, very decidedly dislike it, as what sensible man would not?’ But I confess I have heard some long sermons, whose merits were so great in point of eloquence, in brilliant oratory, in elegant, refined language, noble ideas, and so forth, that no one could, in my opinion, fail of being charmed by the perfection of the style, at least, if nothing more.”

"Oh! I only wish you had heard some of the fine oratory, brilliant eloquence, noble ideas, and so forth, bestowed upon me by Mrs. Hall, when first I came on board!" exclaimed Sophy, in a mocking manner. "As if anything she could say would make an impression upon me!"

"Oh, Sophy! do not speak in that way, dear! Neither the subject nor the person is deserving of it," I said.

"I *hate* her, that I do!" she cried, with a burst of wild vehemence; "and if ever she dare attempt to shut me up in my cabin, as she so often declares she will do, let her look to the consequences, that is all!"

The burning glow in her before pallid cheeks, and the fierce glare of her eyes, appeared so like insanity, that we were all filled with a momentary feeling of trepidation.

"Are you not looking forward with pleasure to the plays we purpose performing shortly on deck, Miss Brown?" asked Captain Beaufort, the usual calmness of his voice a good deal ruffled, for the angry girl kept

glancing at the gallant officer in a panther-like style, and as if she believed him in some way connected with this threatened incarceration of her liberty-loving little self. "Come," he continued, cheerfully, "do not let us waste our time and words on unpleasant people and subjects; let us instead plan some agreeable doings for the coming week. What character do you propose assuming, Miss Sophy?"

In a short time we became surrounded by gay companions of both sexes. Our subject of conversation quickly attracted the walkers, hot and weary with a very little exertion in such weather as this; and groups gathered near and around us to discuss the momentous affair of the approaching play. With some difficulty I managed to escape to Mrs. Graham's cabin, whom for a good while I had been longing to join, but was deterred, not liking to leave Edith in company with Sophy and Captain Beaufort.

CHAPTER XVI.

Many a house in this town is a swan-house, all white and fair outside, but only think of the black legs that are working out of sight !

Take a skeleton from the box of an anatomist ; give its head an immovable mask of flesh ; clothe the skull, but leave besides dry bones ; make it calculate but not feel ; give it motion but not life ; and there 's your model—there 's your trading gamester.—JERROLD.

THE next morning I missed Mrs. Graham's sweet, sad face at the breakfast table. She had the day before been particularly out of spirits, and I feared her absence now was from the same painful cause that had thrown its dark shadow around her the preceding day.

"Your fair young face looks singularly cloudy this bright morning, Miss Irvin," observed my neighbour, Colonel Thornley. "What is the cause ? begging you to excuse the freedom of the question."

"The cause," I replied, with a slight laugh

of embarrassment, “is Mrs. Graham’s absence from the table. I am puzzling myself as to the reason of her non-appearance.”

“Mrs. Graham? Ah, yes—so she is,” he answered, looking round. “To be sure. Yes—I see—that pretty, gentle young person who always sits opposite to us? Yes—I wonder what is the matter with her?—a headache probably, or something of that sort? Hers is a countenance I admire—I cannot exactly say why—yet I must confess I did not remark her absence until you mentioned it. There are some faces you see,” continued the old officer, gazing markedly at me, “whose beauty eclipses all others, causing their presence or absence to be alike overlooked.”

This gallant speech sent a rush of colour into my cheeks, as I rejoined,—

“I do not know any one not related to me for whom I have felt such an interest as for Mrs. Graham; she is so faultlessly amiable. I am sure the sorrow which weighs upon her spirits, and which must be perceived by everybody, cannot have originated from any

conduct of her own ; of that my close intimacy with her has made me quite certain."

" She has not let you into any of her secrets then ?—never disclosed any of her domestic troubles ? "

" No, never."

A silence of some minutes followed, and we continued eating our breakfast. Colonel Thornley then added,—

" I am, strangely enough, acquainted with a good deal of her sad history. They resided a considerable time—her husband and herself, I mean—in the neighbourhood of some friends of mine, whom I occasionally visited for a few days at a time. Many rumours were then afloat concerning the Grahams, at least of him, which naturally enough came to my knowledge while there ; but I do not feel justified in making disclosures of family affairs, which she has hitherto thought fit to conceal from you ; however, thus much I may fairly say, that while every heart pitied, and every voice was warm in praise of, Mrs. Graham, the very reverse was the case with regard to her husband. Indeed, I was told

that he was everywhere severely blamed for his odious conduct generally, but to his amiable, inoffensive wife especially. The last account I heard of him was his having gone on a tour into Scotland with a very, so report said, objectionable party, men and women, with whom, as a married man, he certainly ought not to have associated. Whither Mrs. Graham is now going, or why she is alone, without her husband, I cannot conceive."

"Does she know you by sight or name?" I asked. "I have never seen you speak to her."

"I do not suppose that she ever heard of me," answered Colonel Thornley. "I saw her two or three times at church, but she did not observe me. No, she cannot be acquainted even with my name, at least not till she came on board. Their life was a secluded one; when I say that, no, I am wrong—far from secluded, indeed! What I mean is, he discouraged all intimacy with any of the really desirable county society, and filled his house instead with people

whose characters, habits, and manners were so disreputable that it was impossible for his gentle, refined wife to find companionship with them. But I fear I am saying too much," he added, hastily checking himself again; "Mrs. Graham will, no doubt, tell you all her distresses before long, if you wait patiently."

"Oh! just tell me this," I exclaimed, deeply interested by what he had already said, and unable to restrain my girlish curiosity; "in what profession was, or is, Mr. Graham?"

"None at the time I speak of. He had been in the army, but quitted it soon after entering, either of his own will or from compulsion, I know not which. The cause, however, was a quarrel with the colonel of his regiment."

"Were they rich?"

I knew Colonel Thornley liked and admired me, and, womanlike, I took full advantage of it to persevere in my questions, notwithstanding his reluctance to reply to them.

"Well, that is a question which I cannot exactly answer. He was reputed to be rich; but the same report carried with it that he was both a desperate gambler and a singularly successful one. How far the handsome establishment he kept up, and the large and frequent entertainments he gave to his own particular friends, were indebted for their excellence and abundance to his good luck at cards, can be known only to himself, and perchance to his poor, unhappy young wife. But now positively, young lady, I must beg you to cease tempting me further, with those bright, inquisitive, brown eyes of yours. Mrs. Graham will, I am sure, find relief by and by in confiding all her sorrows to so gentle and sympathizing a friend as yourself."

Colonel Thornley was a fine, handsome, soldierlike old man; but his constant flattery rather worried me, and destroyed that perfect ease and pleasure in his society which, with a man of his age, I should otherwise have enjoyed.

CHAPTER XVII.

Bright rose the sun next day, and all the flowers of the garden
Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and anointed his tresses
With the delicious balm that they bore in their vases of crystal.
Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's heart,
but a secret,
Subtle sense crept in of pain and indefinite terror;
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest of the swallow.
It was no earthly fear.—LONGFELLOW.

ON the evening of the following day I was sitting with my friend Mary Graham in her cabin. We had had a long conversation together; she told me much of her past, sad history, which I will not now enter into; but the reason of the increased depression upon her spirits during yesterday and to-day I will recount in her own exciting

words. I was, according to her wish, lying on the couch. She sat near the window, and for some minutes remained absorbed in deep thought, gazing out upon the tranquil sea, glittering beneath the flood of golden light that streamed from the setting sun, and covered the deep waters with an effulgence as though the windows of Heaven were open.

“ You are anxious to know, my love, why to-day and yesterday I have been more than usually full of sorrow. I will tell you.” She spoke in trembling accents. “ On this day, four years ago, I was to have been married to one whom I loved. Oh! what matters it to talk of that now? Well, I was living then in a pleasant home in the country, with a widowed mother and an only sister. One brother I had too, a fine, handsome, warm-hearted boy, who had come home for a few days from a distant school, to be present at my wedding. I dearly loved him,—poor, darling Arthur!—and he as truly returned my affection. For my sake he rejoiced at my approaching happiness,

yet well I knew that in his generous young heart he secretly pined under the thought of my leaving them. Ireland, the country of my future husband, was henceforth to be my home, and consequently I and my family would, excepting for brief intervals, be separated.

“As we wandered together that day round the house and grounds for the last time before my marriage, I saw more than once the tears in his bright blue eyes, and a flush on his cheek, while we passed the dear familiar objects in which we had both taken such interest and pleasure. The little garden, the plants, birds, greenhouse, had now, one and all, lost their attractions for him. For myself, I could not define my feelings concerning either the persons or things of my beloved home. Not for everything the world contained would I have refused to go with him, the chosen of my heart; and yet a sensation of keen sorrow hung about my joy,—it was as a cloud on the bright spring morning sky, or the thorns around the rose, neither the less bright nor the less sweet

because of cloud or thorn. With my sigh of natural regret at the thought of the parting hour, came the irrepressible smile of untold delight that so it was to be. Oh, how I longed for his return! He was now in Ireland, where during the past week he had been engaged in inspecting various alterations and improvements being made on his property previously to its becoming, as he said, my home. He was rich, and no expense was spared to render my future residence as delightful and as much in accordance as possible with what he knew to be my taste. To-morrow he would be again with me! No joy was for me complete, no rest even perfect, apart from him. He was the chosen of my inmost soul: in him my very existence was so bound up, that when we were separated I always felt as if my spirit had lost its power of enjoyment; but the mere sound of the low, quiet voice filled me with happiness. At last the morning, a bright and beautiful one, opened upon the day of his return. I should soon hear his loving words, be clasped in his

arms. Oh, the thoughts of my coming happiness were almost more than I could bear! they kept me awake nearly all night. At five o'clock I was up and dressed. No one seemed astir in the house save myself. What a still and glorious morning it was! I stood at the open window in my room, gazing with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain at the sunny sparkling scene stretched out before me. One morning more and I should look my last for a while, perhaps for ever, on that loved old-fashioned garden, brilliant with its flowers of every hue, be-gemmed with cool, clear dewdrops, dancing on each leaf and spray! The sweet and varied landscape, too, with its fields and meadows full of cattle—its orchards, valleys, woods, and hills all bathed in the rich glow of the early sunshine, while here and there deep shades, like dark thoughts, struck along the hill sides, or marked the outline of some prominent object in the view. Oh, how well! how clearly I remember that morning! that scene! Oh, that dreadful, dreadful day!"

Mrs. Graham ceased speaking for a few minutes, striving to command her feelings.

"Notwithstanding the freshness and radiance of the morning," she again continued, "a certain gloom weighed upon my spirits which I could not account for, and which seemed at this time so unreasonable, that I felt quite angry with myself. At breakfast I resolved not to yield to it. I laughed and talked so merrily that, as dear Arthur said, we were quite a jolly party—we younger ones, at least; for our beloved mother was ever gentle and subdued. All elasticity of spirits had long been destroyed in her, from the effects of ill health and the shadowing recollections of bygone troubles. Her sweet ready smile was, however, more valued by her children than the most light-hearted mirth would have been, and threw its cheering warmth over the many flowers of happiness with which our yet early path in life had hitherto been thickly strown. Well, the effort to appear gay at last restored to me the reality. All my joyousness came back, and when the post arrived—which it always did at breakfast-

time—though there was no letter for me, I experienced merely a species of contented disappointment—a softly hilarious indifference. What mattered it? Would not he be with me himself to-night, the dear, dear darling? And to-morrow—yes, to-morrow!—should I not be his, and he mine, for evermore, through time and eternity? One letter there was for dear mamma, and we were very merry about it, and declared unanimously that it was too bad that she who cared so little for letters, unless they came from any of her three pets,—myself, Lucy, and Arthur,—should that morning be the only lucky person. Thus talking and jesting, I happened at the moment to look across at my mother to ask who was her correspondent, and was suddenly struck by the expression of her usually placid face. It was now pale and full of a dismay which she seemed endeavouring to suppress. At once my heart gave way—an undefined feeling of apprehension thrilled through me! What could it be that had so distressed her? Her eyes anxiously and fearfully met mine. In a low

voice, whose calmness my excited ear detected instantly to be forced, she answered the unasked question, trembling on my lips,—

“ ‘It is from an old friend, my love—she is very ill, which grieves me much.’

“ ‘My mother was always truth itself, why did I doubt her now ?

“ ‘Do not mind me, my dear children,’ she added, rising from her chair, and slowly leaving the room and her half-finished breakfast, and retaining the letter in her hand.

“ Heavy and unsteady were her steps. I had never seen them so before. Directly after I, too, arose, saying I would go and comfort poor mamma.

“ ‘Oh, do, dear Mary !’ exclaimed the kind-hearted Arthur. ‘ Poor mother ! she feels everything so keenly.’

“ ‘Yes, do Mary ! you can comfort her better than I can,’ said Lucy, as I quitted the room.

“ Who can it be, I kept repeating to myself, as I ascended the stairs, and why did mamma look in that way at me ? Pressing my hand upon my heart to try and stay its

throbbing, I reached her dressing-room, the door of which was partly closed, but I could distinctly hear every movement within. I could not have said why I stood there—why I did not at once, as I should on any other occasion, go in and throw my arms round her in my own old way, and beg her to unburden her grief to me, her loving and sympathizing daughter. Some resistless power held me back—I remained panting heavily and listening ! Then I heard the sound of her desk—she kept her writing materials in that room—being shut down. And now I thought —oh! how wildly active were my thoughts !—she has put the letter in there, in the desk ; and she will go into her bed-room, and lock the door between, and kneel in her favourite spot beside her bed, and, alone with her God, pray, as was ever her pious custom under all straits and sorrows, for support and direction.

“ She went.

“ I waited until all was still, save the dull sound of my beating heart, when, gently pushing open the door of the dressing-room,

I entered. I cannot conceive what possessed me at that moment! Never in my life before had I, unpermitted, read a line of any letter not my own; but now impetuous feelings hurried me on. The lid of the desk was raised with a trembling but decided hand. There lay the letter: in an instant it was opened, and I read—alas! though years have passed since that fatal day, the remembrance of the agony of that moment half maddens me even now! Sometimes I can scarcely divest my mind of the impression that the whole was a frightful attack of delirium.

“I read—I read—oh! I know not what the words were!—I knew not then; but the sense—yes, the sense flashed upon me like fire piercing through my brain! He was dead!—dead!

“How horrible that word looked on the paper! He had been thrown from his horse, and soon after died!—died in great agony! And yet some of his last thoughts, his last words, were of me—of my sorrow, my great, great sorrow! Poor fellow!—poor dear fellow!—to think that in the midst of his

dying anguish, his grief, his pity should be for me !

“ Oh, it is passing strange how keenly all my feelings and every circumstance forced themselves on my attention, independently, as it were, of sight and will ; and they have clung to my recollection ever since !

“ The weather was hot and sultry—the middle of July ; yet when I read that letter, an icy cold sensation, beginning at my feet, mounted through my whole frame to my head ; then my hair felt as if drawn slowly up from the roots ; and as I still gazed at the letter, the words became apparently red, as if written with blood ! With a chill shudder, mechanically I replaced it in the desk, and returned to my room ; helping myself on by the wall, I knew not why, for I felt neither weak nor faint. In my room, I shut the door, and sat down and gazed around me at the bridal gear lying on the chairs and tables, in readiness for to-morrow’s use !

“ I cannot tell how long I thus remained immovably staring about with hot, dry, tearless eyes and frozen brain. Some-

times I forgot what was the matter, and where I was—then again a frightful consciousness returned, yet I was not sure that I had not been to sleep and dreamed a hideous dream. By and by a servant came into the room, and looked at me. I can recollect she was surprised and terrified, and spoke some words, but I did not understand her. My faculties were again becoming numb, and she hurried away, stopping at the door, and glancing back with a scared and white face.

“Alone, I relapsed once more into a state of forgetfulness. That passed, and I became aware of the presence of my sister Lucy sitting by my side, her arm thrown affectionately round me, her forehead pressed against my shoulder, and crying bitterly. The sound of her grief recalled in me that keen perception of passing events which I have already described; but the intense agony of my mind had somehow strangely subsided. I wondered at my own composure, still remembering, as I did, the paralyzing affliction which was crushing me

to the earth. My face must have told a mournful tale of the real state of my mind, in opposition to the cold quietness of my manner, for when poor Lucy, making an effort to suppress her tears, raised her head, and, looking into my eyes, met their wild gaze, she again lowered it directly, with an uncontrollable burst of anguish at sight of that heart's misery of which I was not myself now conscious.

"Just then, alas! a cheerful loud voice came from the hall below: it was Arthur's; he had been out, and knew not of the whirlwind that had wrecked all my happiness. Joyously he called to me to come to him; and—ah me!—he, as was often his wont, summoned me gaily by that beloved name, which even now it is pain and sorrow to me to speak. His ascending steps quickly approached the door: Lucy sprang forward to check his further progress, and stop the repetition of those words, which, in my present state, hovering on the brink of insanity, might have at once driven me into positive madness.

“Poor Arthur! he was standing within the door staring at me in blank amazement. Lucy, with sobbing voice, whispered a few brief sentences in his ear. I saw—for vacantly I watched them—I saw him start violently, and the red blood rushed to his cheek and brow—a crimson tide—and the tears filled his kind, blue eyes, as he exclaimed, in suppressed tones,—

“‘Oh, poor Mary!’ and, turning hastily round, quitted the room.

“They all knew—oh! well they knew—how I loved *him*!

“And now a long period of darkness and of horror succeeded. For six weeks my life was despaired of, and two months had passed over my fever-stricken head ere reason was again perfectly restored.

“During the three succeeding years, our darling mother died, and Arthur, who had entered the Indian army, lost his noble young life in one of those dreadful battles—”

“May I come in?” inquired a clear, merry voice at the cabin-door, to my great annoyance and vexation. It was such an unpleasant

interruption just at that moment, especially as my eyes, and, indeed, poor Mary's also, were red with crying. However, she rapidly put up the Venetian blind to the window, and then said, in as composed a voice as she could command,—

“Yes, pray do;” and Edith entered. Throwing herself into an easy chair, she exclaimed, while wiping her flushed face with her handkerchief,—

“Oh, how hot it is! Really, if this weather lasts much longer, I shall vanish off the face of the earth—no, I mean the ocean—altogether. I am reduced almost to a thread-paper already.”

“It is very hot indeed,” said Mary, in an abstracted manner, trying to collect her scattered senses.

“But why do you go up on deck before sunset?” I asked. “It is considerably hotter there than anywhere below.”

“Do you think so?” she replied, evidently not wishing to be convinced of the fact, and commenced fanning herself vigorously. “Well, the truth is, I suppose the deck is

much pleasanter and more cheerful than down in my cabin, or even in the cuddy—not that I really imagine the difference is so great as you suppose, Miss Kitty,"—and Edith blushed very prettily and very consciously.

I looked admiringly at her, saying,—

"Are there many people on deck?"

"Oh, lots! Several of the ladies went up directly after breakfast, and, excepting for meals, have not quitted it the whole day, and are there even now. Gentlemen, of course, are abundant in all parts of the ship, but on deck in particular, and many amongst them are capital subjects to flirt with."

"Notwithstanding the heat," I continued, laughing; "and Captain Beaufort in particular!"

Edith laughed too, and blushed again, adding,—

"So, on the whole, it is far preferable to be in such company than in our little hole of a cabin, with no companion but that stupid cousin of mine. Oh, you would have died with laughter to see us both fighting this

morning for the looking-glass ! Was not that a truly feminine subject of dispute ? Lucy, who, for some reason or other, has lately taken it into her head to devote a good deal of attention to personal appearance, persists in keeping the glass such an unreasonably long time before breakfast and dinner every day, that I am sometimes not able to see how I look or to arrange my dress before encountering the forty pairs of eyes bristling round the cuddy-table. Well, at last I lost all patience. You know, at the best of times, I am not liberally endowed with that virtue, and so resolved I would not stand this any longer. To-day, therefore, I insisted upon a just share of the aforesaid article from *Vanity Fair*. This of course led to a dispute, and from that to a regular quarrel, which waxed fiercer and hotter every instant—it does not require much in these fiery regions to rouse one's blood into a fever ; but that you may better understand the full fun of the affair, I must tell you Lucy was sitting perched on one chair, while her feet were supported on the bar of another, the better to enable her

comfortably to prop up the glass placed on her lap against her knees,—she does look such a queer figure thus arranged!—‘All of a podge,’ as Mrs. Katherine would elegantly express it,—and was combing out and settling her long curls. I, meanwhile, overflowing with wrath and indignation, doubly aggravated by her cold, heartless, cynical answers, was seated on the couch, and showering down upon her hardened head a storm of angry words, twenty, perhaps fifty, in return for her one; when, oh! suddenly the ‘Bird of Passage,’ which had hitherto been skimming over the bright waters as smoothly as an albatross, took it into her capricious head to go diving down sideways—down! down! Over went Lucy, glass, chairs, and every movable thing; and there they tumbled together about on the floor. As for myself, I was thrown off the sofa on to my knees, but, quickly managing to scramble up again, every sensation of anger ludicrously knocked out of me, I re-seated myself; and, oh! did not I laugh, as I watched Lucy struggling between the chairs, and repeatedly rolling

back when she had almost gained her feet!"

And Edith, amused beyond control at the bare recollection, could scarcely go on with her story, so excessive was her merriment.

"You should have seen the awfully black looks which she darted at me!" continued the delighted narrator, "as she awkwardly replaced the chairs, and then, with the grace of a sulky young bear, bumped herself down into one of them, and scowled at me from under her thick eyebrows. I secured the glass, however, just as it was shooting away under the sofa. Lucy's cheeks were crimson with suppressed rage, as she sat eyeing me and the captured glass. But really her self-control is wonderful. She literally trembled with passion, and yet did not utter a word; quietly re-arranged her disordered tresses, smoothed out the crumpled folds of her dress, and, taking up one of the French novels she is so fond of, soon became as absorbed in its contents as though nothing had occurred to disturb her provoking equanimity. I must

allow that she is of a quiet temper, if not an amiable one."

"Do not you think this recent anxiety to set off her handsome person to the greatest advantage, is in compliment to Mr. Bouverie?" I inquired, laughing. "Hitherto it has seemed to me that reading novels has been, since coming on board, the one great pleasure of her existence."

"No doubt of it," answered Edith; "and are you not surprised that such a good-looking girl can for a moment tolerate so commonplace a little wretch of a man, and actually meditate marrying him?—which I know she does. It is really astonishing."

"Does she intend marrying him?" I inquired. "Oh! surely not."

"That she does, I can tell you," affirmed Edith. "She acknowledged as much herself,—in fact, that such was her positive intention,—during a conversation on the subject into which I urged her the other day. She said she had discovered that he was very rich, and possessed of a beautiful country place in England; that his health was in a

precarious state, and this voyage was undertaken as a last forlorn hope of prolonging, if not of saving his life. Lucy, with one of her cold smiles, declared that she wanted to be rich, and a widow, and so 'it would just do !'"

Mary and I were greatly shocked, not only at hearing of sentiments so lamentably heartless and wicked, especially in one so young as Miss Frere, but also at the announcement of poor Mr. Bouverie's dangerous condition. He was certainly the very last man on board to whom we should have thought of attaching the idea of death. A short, broad-shouldered, thick-set man, with a wide, well-developed chest, and large, full, red face; a voice at all times rather loud, pompous, and dictatorial, and an extremely self-satisfied manner. Who would have dreamed such a seeming pillar of strength was so undermined as to be then "tottering to its fall"!

"Do you really believe she means what she says?" asked Mary, incredulously.

"Mean it!" repeated Edith; "indeed she does, I am sorry to say. No one knows

Lucy so well as I do, and I am quite sure she is fully competent for anything she resolves upon ; and that she has so resolved, I am certain."

" Is she an orphan ?"

" No, her father is living—General Frere, in the Company's service. Her mother died three or four years ago, and the old General took it into his foolish head to marry again, a young girl—a mere child in comparison to himself—younger than Lucy ; and the strongest passion in the heart of the latter is hatred of this juvenile step-mother, and a fixed determination to make her see and feel it too."

" What a sad prospect of unhappiness for them both !" I observed.

" Is it not ?" replied Edith. " However, Lucy, who has plenty of common sense, knows very well that a warfare of that kind must terminate in the weakest going to the wall ; and a poor portionless school-girl, even though the General's daughter, will be a nobody in the house with his young wife, for the friends are sure to support the cause of the

latter, who is, I am told, very beautiful, and highly accomplished; not but that Lucy is clever and handsome enough in her way, too."

"Well, then, all things considered, Lucy is wise in wishing to marry soon, especially as she is resolved to commence at once with hating and fighting her poor young step-mother," I observed. "But, at the same time, being such a fine, distinguished-looking girl, and fair besides,—which is, they say, so much admired in that country of bronze complexions, India,—I wonder she is in such a hurry as to take up with one so contrary to her taste as Mr. Bouverie must be. Do not you remember her formerly expressed opinion of fat, snub-nosed men in general, and Mr. Bouverie in particular?"

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Edith, laughing. "But how the poor infatuated little creature ever took it into his head to fall in love with such an indolent girl as my good cousin, I cannot conceive. She will tell me no particulars—close, reserved thing! I conclude, however, that he, desirous of the

sympathy of a gentle female heart, confided his sorrows and sufferings to Lucy's tender hearing one soft moonlight night, while they were walking together on deck, which they have constantly done of late. One thing I am certain of, Lucy is doing nothing in the dark; or, if through any misrepresentations or deceptions concerning himself, Mr. Bouverie has induced her to accept his offer of marriage, he may depend upon it Miss Lucy will, when she finds it out, throw him off without the least remorse. Once a rich widow, she never intends to marry again, she told me, but purposes living solely for pleasure, having plenty of admirers and luxuries, and being as happy as the day is long!"

"What an unfeeling, unprincipled girl!" I exclaimed.

"She is, indeed, I grieve to say," answered Edith. "But now, to talk of something more agreeable, do you know that to-night they intend to have a species of pantomime on deck, on account of this being the first pay-day of the sailors at sea, or

something of that sort? It is called 'The Burial of the White Horse,' and every lady is expected to grace the ceremony by her presence, so both of you will of course be up there."

"I fear it will be at too late an hour and the air too damp for me," I replied, colouring, as the remarks which I had overheard passing between the two cousins in their cabin touching my ill health returned to my remembrance.

"Oh, dear, no! there can be nothing to hurt you, Kitty dear. You *must* come up," cried Edith, persuasively; "it will be such fun; and there is no one on board who will appreciate anything of the kind more than your quiet little self—in fact, come you both must; so when you hear a more than usual stir taking place, look out for a white squall in the shape of myself: I shall make my way into these tranquil waters, and bear you off to the whirlpool above. I will not take any refusal, mind."

"Oh, no, no! my dear Miss Grant," Mary exclaimed, kindly coming to the rescue. "It

is quite clear," she continued, in a tone of affected seriousness, "that you are not aware I am assistant doctor to Mr. Hill; and he and I both strictly prohibit any exposure to night air for our precious little patient; and though extremely sorry to disappoint you in your wish for her society, as also hers for the amusement, I am, nevertheless, constrained to do so, and at once to forbid her to leave her cabin after dusk, or to make any attempt to view the coming ceremony except through her own or my cabin window."

Edith shrugged her shoulders, as she observed, "Well, Miss Kitty, if you have no more regard for life and limb than to seat yourself between two stools,—begging your doctor's pardon,—I do not wonder at the doubt you expressed the other day, or rather the fear, that you might never— But, joking apart," she added, quickly, "what possible harm could accrue to the most delicate person from coming on deck at any hour, sailing, as we now do, within the tropics? Oh! I am convinced it would do you both

good to come up ! Indeed, Kate would get quite well, if she only did just the same as everybody else, and forgot entirely that she is, or ever has been, an invalid. I'll be bound she would sleep as soundly again if, instead of sitting all the evening in this stupid little cabin, she were to join us in the merry round games of cards we very often have in the cuddy; or stay sometimes and dance quadrilles and waltz on deck, by the splendid oriental moonlight. It is very delightful, I can tell you, Miss Kitty."

" What is poor little Sophy Brown doing with herself this hot weather ? " asked Mary, wishing to change the conversation.

Edith immediately looked grave.

" Sophy ? Well, I scarcely know what to say. Her conduct is truly sad. All her time now, whenever I see her, is occupied in flirting with some one or other of the gentlemen ; the most blameable remarks are in free circulation over the whole vessel concerning her strange conduct—in short, I am told that she daily shows more unsoundness of mind

than ever. She is so oddly capricious, too. The chevalier suivant in most favour with her at present is Captain Clerk. She quickly tired of Major Manvers—I actually heard her tell him she did not like him. Captain Beaufort is weary of her, if he ever did care for so irrational a creature, which I do not believe he could do for a moment; and in a short time she will tire of Captain Clerk. Is it not all very strange and very sad? I really cannot understand it!"

Edith's words exceedingly distressed me. Poor little creature! She had made her way into my heart further than either she or I was conscious of. Mrs. Graham and I seldom mixed much in the society on board, and rarely, excepting for purposes of air, exercise, and meals, left our cabins. My delicate health deterred me, and disinclination my friend; the knowledge, therefore, of what went on in the "Bird of Passage" reached us principally through report.

"I had so hoped," I said, "that Mrs. Hall was exerting her influence to save her young-

charge from increasing disgrace? Is it so?"

"Well, yes," answered Edith, "in a sort of way she did try; and of course with her usual success. She talked to the girl in a scolding, bitter, harsh kind of style, and then, finding it of no avail, had recourse to the old threat of locking her up in her cabin for the remainder of the voyage. Hitherto Sophy had turned either a deaf ear or a scornful one to every remonstrance; but at mention again of the imprisonment, she roused up—Alice Hall told me—like a young tigress, and, in a fierce, wild, earnest manner, that admitted of no doubt of its sincerity, declared that if Mrs. Hall, or anybody else, dared to confine her in that dark hole of a cabin, she would get out of the window and drown herself! Yes, that she would! Alice said her mother was perfectly terrified by her violence; and since then no one has interfered with her goings on, excepting those who foolishly encourage her in them. She does what she pleases, and seems rushing down the hill of perdition at railway speed."

"She will be cut by every lady passenger on board," observed Mary, sorrowfully.

"Will be! She is that already," exclaimed Edith, "as far, at least, as it is possible with so incorrigible a creature; but not one bit does she care! Really, angry as I feel with her, I cannot sometimes help laughing at the consummate impudence of her manner. Instead of being in the slightest degree abashed or offended by the reproving looks and icy words of the company, she is positively quite amused, and remains as imperceptibly indifferent, polite, chatty, and merry with everybody, as if she knew herself to be an especial favourite. Some who ventured very decidedly to mark their disapprobation of her behaviour, were absolutely forced to notice her, for Sophy coolly singled them out on deck and in the cuddy as particular objects of her attention; and in that simple, childish way which she so well knows how to assume, turned everything they said and did into ridicule, with so much sarcastic wit, that no one could help laughing at her words; and, what with her strange

elfish beauty and her exceeding liveliness, she is always surrounded and uproariously supported by the younger members of the company. A cunning piece of amusement, too, of hers is to encourage little Jessy—the horrid little torment—to stay with her; and the two romp about together, Sophy just as much of a baby for the nonce as the other; and all this to everybody's inconvenience and annoyance, the more provokingly so, because it is plainly seen that her principal motive is to worry and punish them. The majority of the passengers are taking up your opinion, and beginning to consider her half mad, and for that reason they feel more disposed to pity than to censure her."

"I am so sorry for her,—so very, very sorry!" I cried; "poor little frantic girl, for I never can think her anything else than mad, let people say what they like. What is to become of her?"

"I am truly sorry for her, too," answered Edith, pityingly; "I cannot help liking the girl. But what can be done? Advice, gentle and kind, from friends, scoldings and threat-

enings from her guardian,—injudicious, perhaps, but well meant,—public disapprobation, cold words, repellent looks, anything, everything, each and all, she either totally disregards, or insultingly sets at defiance and laughs at."

CHAPTER XVIII.

And then a blaze there rose so bright,
Pouring red radiance on the night,
O'er deck and mast and wave-top playing,
With every fitful night-wind swaying.—HEMANS.

LONG after Edith left us, Mary and I sat together in silence. I always consider that friendship has reached the true point of enjoyment when two people can be happy and at ease in each other's society without feeling obliged to talk. It proves that all restraint, all mere ceremony, has passed away: it proves that being together is alone sufficient to satisfy.

And now the shades of evening gave place to the darkness of night. The stars came out: hosts of bright, beautiful stars with their soft radiance lit up the dark splendour of

sea and sky; phosphoric fire flashed and danced on the wave-tops by our good ship's side ; and far, far behind, even until lost to sight, it spread and glittered, and formed a wide, brilliant track in her wake. Suddenly there burst upon the gloom, and instantly dispersed it, a flame of unearthly-looking light, falling in a continuous stream of dazzling sparks into the water, just beside our window.

“ Oh, that’s the blue light ! ” I exclaimed ; “ and they have evidently attached it to the end of this large boat hanging on our side the vessel. How fortunate ! I am so glad ! Perhaps, too, we shall see the white horse. Would not that be an unexpected piece of good luck ? Do come and look, dear Mary. The sea is sparkling all over ! I can almost think I hear it fizzing ! ”

Mrs. Graham had been sitting very still and silent. She started at my request, and, sighing wearily,—the spirit’s weariness,—arose slowly and came to my side. Presently voices and footsteps gathered fast and loud on deck ; there was much talking and laugh-

ing, and a complication of sounds and movements which became quite bewildering, all the more so from our not seeing and knowing the meaning of them. Then came a gradual cessation of the tumult, and finally an almost complete stillness, the blue light meanwhile burning steadily and with luminous flash over the deep, dark depths beside the vessel. I knelt close to the window, keeping a vigilant look-out for the "Ghost Horse," and Mrs. Graham was near me. Just then we heard the slow, measured tramp of many feet along the deck, seemingly from one end to the other, accompanied by a low, monotonous song—a species of dirge, chanted by the sailor-procession in strict time to their movements. This requiem was very beautiful and very mournful, consisting only of a few bars of a wild, simple melody. Some of the men were gifted with fine, rich voices, that might have made them the envy of many a public singer; and the effect, owing to the influence of time, place, and inward feelings, was even painfully exciting. Silently, and

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I confess with tearful eyes, we continued to watch the sparkling waters. Still went on the tramp, tramp, tramp of feet; at last it reached a point at the vessel's side, and stopped just a little beyond our window. The singing had changed now to a different air,—it was in a slower measure, and yet more mournful: no other voices than those of the choir were heard. Presently came a general, and, as it were, hushed “stop and stir” on deck; then a heavy, sudden plunge into the lighted water, the dirge song continuing the while, sometimes loud, sometimes soft.

“Oh, there it is!” cried I, under my breath, as the gigantic form of a white horse rose up out of the waves, and floated slowly by. It was so skilfully constructed, that the whole of the upper part of the body, and the head and shoulders, rested high on the waters, and, in the lurid glare of the blue light, presented an exact, and to the nervous-minded, such as myself, even a rather appalling appearance, of a great spectral reality.

For a minute or two I weakly turned away my head, when, upon looking again, the Ghost

Horse was far off in the distance, but still clearly visible, sailing on, on, out upon the ocean, wild and wide—a strange visionary object.

Again the sailors resumed their march round the deck, singing, if possible, a yet more charming air than the former. There was something in the whole of this little pantomime more affecting to the feelings than persons who have not witnessed it could conceive possible. On land, anything of the sort would be regarded as a folly not worth looking at; but the attendant circumstances were what constituted its greatest charm, and invested it with a vague superstitious interest, that left, as all declared, a lasting impression on their minds. I had continued so absorbed in everything going on without and above, that my gentle companion was, for the time, totally forgotten by me. In making some remark, I now turned to observe her, and was grieved to see that she had been weeping bitterly. Her face was still buried in her slender white hands, and her head bowed down. Throwing my arms round her, I mingled my tears with hers.

CHAPTER XIX.

A wild dedication of yourselves
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores; most certainly
To miseries enough.

ANOTHER week sped on. Again we were, one evening, in expectation of a tempest. Good, gruff old Captain Henley wandered about, terrifying the ladies with grumbling announcements of the approaching evil, just as if he thought it was their fault that all this trouble came upon his vessel. I have before observed, that when the weather permitted, many passengers preferred staying on deck, and having their tea brought to them, to encountering the heat and crowd of the cuddy; but this evening few did so—all prudent people were driven below by the threatening appearances of sea and sky.

Amongst those, however, who, like ourselves, chose to brave the consequences of remaining above, was a Mrs. Evans, mother of the before-mentioned little Jessy. I had seen this lady two or three times at the commencement of the voyage, but from that time until the present evening, a period of five weeks, she disappeared from the ship-world, remaining entirely with her tiny daughter on the lower deck, where her cabin was situated. The principal reason for this was, that being the wife of only a poor subaltern in the Indian army, she was unable to afford the attendance of a servant, and could not even appear at meals, having no person under whose care to leave Jessy—children not being allowed in the cuddy on those occasions. As far as the latter was concerned, however, her seclusion had little mattered, for no one on board presented more encouraging evidence of the invigorating and beneficial effects of sea-air and cheerful rest during a long voyage than did Mrs. Evans. So remarkable, indeed, was the metamorphosis, that even when told her name, I could trace no resemblance whatever

between the pale, thin, languid young woman I had first noticed, and the present merry, chatty, apple-faced little dame sitting before me. Jessy was always a bonny-looking thing, but even she had flourished amazingly in their below-water abode, presenting a comical baby duplicate of her plump little mother.

It is wonderful how quickly children learn to accommodate their movements to those of a vessel; and so it was that this little Jessy, who was only between three and four years of age, ran about as independently as on the paths of a garden, and delighted in joining Sophy in any wild prank; for, from that evening, Mrs. Evans often forsook her submarine residence, to visit the lighter and more cheerful regions of the upper decks. By all accounts, however, the improvement in her bodily condition had, in no slight degree, brought with it disadvantage to her child—continual eating and drinking, no exercise, and undue portliness, having so greatly dulled her before anxious motherly feelings, that she now paid little heed to Jessy—where she was,

or what she was doing ; and consequently the erratic creature became far more troublesome to everybody else than to her mother. Never still, she staggered up and down the ship, and rushed about at every unlooked-for moment, and in the most dangerous places, and on all available occasions, catching hold of and supporting her little fat self by the ladies' dresses. Her baby hands, always sticky with jam or butter, soon caused her to be regarded with horror by the different girls, more especially on account of the impossibility of refusing the temporary assistance she required, for fear it might be the means of her tumbling through some opening, or rolling out of one of the port-holes. Really I do not think the reckless little thing would have cared if she had ; every expression of her rosy, mischief-loving face, seemed to declare that she would rather enjoy an excursion of the kind than not. Sophy Brown alone was never inconvenienced or angered by Jessy's tricks and importunities. To her they were either matter of perfect indifference, of great amusement, or covertly

used to annoy those whom she wished to punish.

At tea-time, in making my way to the cuddy-table, I noticed, in the brief interval of passing, a sad and marked alteration in the looks and general appearance of the two Misses Adair from what they were when first they came on board. I greatly regretted to see it, though, if called upon to define in what the change consisted, I could not easily have done so. Sophy's chair was on the opposite side of the table to mine, and I plainly saw she was in a more than usually wild and excited state; that she talked and laughed loudly and incessantly with three gentlemen who were sitting round and about her. I sighed as I marked the unnatural flashing and glowing of her brilliant dark eyes, and she was looking unpleasantly handsome, in my opinion. The movements of the "Bird of Passage" were, meanwhile, increasing to an extent almost beyond endurance; she pitched, and plunged, and rolled, and in short, as an old Scotch woman expressed it, "played Mag's diversions" in

so unseemly a fashion, that we could scarcely keep our places. The bags of sand arranged as safeguards beside the cups and plates were wholly insufficient to prevent their tumbling over, and our time was principally occupied in endeavours to save ourselves and property from emigrating to the other end of the cuddy. Peals of laughter resounded from all parts of the table at the numerous mishaps consequent upon this state of affairs. To me, however, it was anything but amusing; I was nervous and uneasy, and often feared the ship would not be able to right herself again, but roll over altogether,—she sometimes lay so completely upon her side, that even the very sails dipped deep into the sea! And, oh! how frightfully the wind howled through every part, and moaned and wailed over the waste of waters like a Banshee who had followed the remnant of some ill-fated, noble house, whose death-knell she was now dolefully shrieking! Colonel Thornley and Mr. Campbell both very kindly tried to re-assure me; and just as the latter was saying that he had

never heard of any dangerous results from the rolling of vessels, the "Bird of Passage" maliciously dived forward, then sideways, with a jerk so sudden and violent, that the confusion and uproar thereby occasioned was distracting. I was thrown completely upon Mr. Campbell, who, laughing good-naturedly at so unceremonious an attack, and at my extreme distress because of it, assisted me to recover my seat. What had become of my cup and saucer in the meanwhile, I never knew; they joined the mêlée on the table, and probably formed a small bit of the mass of destruction covering one side of the floor. Two or three passengers were pitched out of their chairs upon the ground; and the screams and laughter of the ladies, mingling with the rougher voices of the gentlemen, the crash of breaking crockery, and, heard distinctly over all, the terrific rush of water upon the deck,—where, for a considerable time, it continued rolling backwards and forwards in great waves with each movement of the vessel, and, in its passage, dashing whole bucketfuls

down the stairs to find its way into the cuddy and cabins,—produced so appalling a din, that I was frightened half out of my wits, and every instant expected to find myself floating on the ocean, a dainty morsel for the first shark lucky enough to meet me! Gladly accepting the kind offers of Colonel Thornley and Mr. Campbell, I at last took refuge in my own cabin, where, in a few minutes, I was joined by Mary Graham, whose gentle firmness and courage soon helped to calm my agitation. We chatted and read together, and so, in spite of the storm, passed the rest of the evening pleasantly, if not tranquilly.

At a little after nine, Jenny brought our wine and biscuit, concluding, as she said, that we should neither of us fancy returning that night to the cuddy. Edith came in while we were partaking of it.

“I have come for a minute to look you both up,” she exclaimed, in her clear, joyous tone: “I must say you know how to make yourselves comfortable! What a blaze of light for this little place!—two wax candles! Why, you piece o fextravagance! To say

nothing of all the luxury which surrounds you. Were it not for the capers of this foolish old vessel, one might, with a reasonable stretch of imagination, fancy oneself in a little sitting-room in a snug, pretty villa in England."

"Well, for my part," I answered, laughing, "this luxurious cabin, as you term it, never impresses me with any other idea than that, according to gruff old Johnson, 'a ship is merely a prison with the chance of being drowned.'"

"It is lucky, however, for society in general that prisons are not like vessels," replied Edith; "if they were, we should have them thronged with young lady culprits. For my part, I candidly confess, I do not think I should ever be out of jail; it is, everything considered, such a 'very jolly place of confinement!' as Sophy says."

We laughed.

"Were you on your road home when you turned in here?" I asked; "for it is still rather early."

"Yes. The rioters were all dispersing as I came away, excepting Sophy, who was still

in the height of a flirtation with three or four officers. Talking of that unfortunate child, what a very unpleasant person Mrs. Hall, her nominal chaperon, is,—do not you think so?"

"Mary and I have always thought so," I replied; "we cannot bear her look and manner, it is so cold, hard, and stern: just the sort of woman to drive a girl like Sophy, with a disposition so warm a mercurial, into a state of desperation and open rebellion—in fact, into the deplorable state in which she is."

"A good deal of that is true, no doubt," said Edith; "still it is, in reality, no excuse for her being the naughty little creature she is. And then, such a fury! As for poor Alice Hall—'little meek-and-mild,' as Sophy impudently calls her—she is positively frightened out of her wits at the sight of her when she is in a passion. It is certainly a pity that Alice is such a coward; but I suppose she cannot help it. The other day I was sitting on deck with some friends, and Sophy was seated on the ground at my feet; Mrs. Hall

was near us, surrounded by a party of her own intimates, and I heard her say, in answer to some remark just made which had escaped me,—

“ ‘Oh, she is a dreadful little creature ! Her sentiments, her principles, are so lawless—so bold—even, I think, so unnatural, that nothing would induce me to allow her to be the companion of my daughter ; the thing is totally out of the question,’ concluded the lady, waxing quite fierce at the bare idea.

“ You know what strange lightning looks will on occasion flash over Sophy’s face ! Well, just such a look gleamed at once in her features at hearing these words ; it was full of wild, malicious fun,—her dark, bright eyes seemed literally to emit sparks of fire, as, suddenly jumping up, and facing the astonished Mrs. Hall, who had never dreamt of so near a proximity to the enemy, she exclaimed, in cool, measured, ironical tones,—

“ ‘ You act with great and praiseworthy prudence, Mrs. Hall ; keep your daughter from all contaminating society, I advise you.

At present the poor little donkey is contented to plod along the stupid, sunless, cheerless road you have marked out for her, and in harness with your delightful self; but if once I tempt her out of that path, look to it, for you will never get her back again !'

" Could you only have seen the face of the lady mother at these insulting words ! She stared at Sophy as if she were a cobra raising its crest and hissing at her ; she positively shrank under the blazing glance of the little maniac eye, and, with an exceedingly subdued mien, bent down her head, and silently continued her work.

" That monkey of a girl, by her grimaces, enlightened me as to her principal motives for making such a speech : it was said on purpose to increase yet more Mrs. Hall's dread of her companionship with her daughter, and immensely was she satisfied and amused by the obvious success of her many stratagems in that way. She whispered to me,—

" 'I'll be bound, after that, the young gosling will be as carefully preserved from my

dangerous society, as though I were plague-stricken. I am so glad.'

"But it is too late now to stay here gossiping any longer," concluded Edith, rising from the couch whereon she had rested herself; "I must hie away to bed. First I must tell you, though, we are to have another charming dance on deck tomorrow evening,—the weather being propitious, and so forth. Some of us girls attacked that good-natured Mr. Handon, the first officer, on the subject, and got him to promise that he would use his influence with old Captain Henley, who, you know, has a particular antipathy to amusements of any kind on board, especially dancing, which he says is a most dangerous promoter of flirting and love—two things he is, *entre nous*, too old and crabbed to care for himself, and therefore, I conclude, cannot tolerate seeing younger people enjoy. Well, good night, I must run away, or I shall not leave time enough to undress and settle myself before being obliged to put out the lamp. I hope you will not cough as you did last night,

Miss Kitty, but sleep soundly, as all respectable young ladies ought to do."

And Edith, with no more serious idea of a cough on the lungs than she had of a tooth-ache, nodding and smiling, vanished out of the door like a beautiful vision, leaving me sadder rather than happier for her visit.

CHAPTER XX.

The shape

If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For it seemed either ; black it stood as night.

MILTON.

It was midnight ere I closed my weary eyes in sleep ; for so furiously did the sea rage, that I was tumbled and tossed about, until I ached all over as if I had been beaten. I before observed, that, being an invalid, I was permitted to keep my lamp burning as long as I chose ; it was now, therefore, throwing its soft shaded light around the cabin, and rendering every object darkly visible. A most welcome unconsciousness was at last stealing over my senses, when suddenly I was aroused by the unusual sound of a hand

being drawn backwards and forwards over the Venetians without. Sometimes it came close to my head, then was carried down in the direction of my feet, seemingly in search, I thought, of the door, which to my terror was unlocked, the curtain being round it, to admit of open Venetians, on account of the intolerable heat. Just then I perceived the long fingers of a thin white hand grasping the folds of this same curtain. My amazement and agitation were excessive, for not the slightest noise had I heard of the opening of the door. That, however, I knew might easily be the case, when wind and waves were combining to drown all sounds not immediately close to the ear. Terror deprived me of speech, and I continued staring wildly at the hand, which looked so ghastly in the dim lamplight as it remained stationary for a few seconds and was then withdrawn.

Directly after, the other side of the curtain—that next my couch—stirred, and again the ghostlike fingers were protruded, and this time accompanying them, a pallid face and restless gleaming eyes! Never in

my life had I been so frightened. For full a minute that fearsome visage and I stared at each other. The next minute the curtain was impetuously thrown aside, and Sophy Brown rushed in—her dark brown hair hanging in dishevelled masses upon her shoulders—only clad in her dressing-gown, and her stockingless feet half thrust into a pair of slippers.

“I was not sure which was your cabin, Miss Irvin,” she commenced saying, in a hissing whisper, and cowering close down on the ground by my side. “How white you look!” she continued; “what makes you so? Did you see it too?” And she glanced in a rapid, terrified way at the window behind her, and at me.

“See what?” I asked, still greatly agitated; for the strange looks and unreasonable visit of this, at all times, peculiar girl, did little towards re-assuring me.

“It! That horrid thing that just now came up out of the sea, and stared in at me through my cabin-window as I was lying in bed!” answered Sophy, in a low, gasping tone.

"My cabin is just under yours, you know, so I am sure it must have come and looked in here too,—did it not? And did it not stare with its great frightful eyes, and beckon to you with its huge claw-like hand to go with it out—out far away into the deep, dark, dreadful water?"

"No, my dear! no!" I replied, soothingly, and trying to collect my own scattered senses. "Do not give way to these strange fears, Sophy, my love; think quietly for an instant, and you will perceive it was only a dream, nothing more. Come, let us talk about something else."

"What did it want with me, I wonder?" she interrupted, in an eager yet lower whisper, not heeding my words. "Oh! I saw it so plainly! I could not define its form exactly, or what it was like, only that it was hideous and black!—a great thing!—it filled up all the cabin window! And, oh, Miss Irvin! it wanted me to come away with it! I was madly terrified; and yet, do you know," and here she turned her glowing eyes full upon me, "I longed to go with it. I cannot

tell why, but I did ; and I think I should, too, only at that instant I chanced between the storm to hear you cough. Oh, I cannot describe the sensation of relief it was to me as that human sound met my ear ! I jumped at once off the bed, caught up my slippers, and put them on as I rushed along to your cabin!"

" My dear child, depend upon it, it was only a frightful dream!" I again answered; and at the same time endeavoured to recall her thoughts and sensations into a healthy and reasonable channel, by putting my arm protectingly round her, and smoothing her ruffled hair with my disengaged hand ; but she only heard my words, without understanding them : her look retained its scared, abstracted expression, as the sound but not the sense reached her ear. Inexpressibly distressed, I did not know what to do, for I was at a loss to discover what really ailed her—whether a fit of temporary insanity, or the effects of a nightmare.

" Hark ! what is that?" gasped the poor girl, shudderingly drawing close to me, and

turning a strained, horrified glance over her shoulder at the window.

Oh, truly thankful I felt, as I called to mind how near at hand was my kind, sensible friend, Mary Graham.

"Did you not hear a strange noise, Miss Irvin?" she continued, in the same low voice. "Look! do not you see something moving there?"—and, moaning piteously, she pressed her white face convulsively against me.

"Nothing can come to us here, dear!" I said, thinking it, perhaps, best, after all, to humour her fears for the present. "Do not you perceive the curtain is before the window; and, besides that, though you cannot see it, the port is fast closed, therefore nothing can come through into my cabin; and if we were in any danger, I would immediately call the captain; you know he is near this part of the vessel."

These assurances seemed to somewhat comfort her. She glanced furtively again at the window, and, with a deep-drawn sigh of relief, while the harassed distraught

expression of her beautiful countenance began to subside, answered,—

“Oh, yes, I see! How glad I am! Oh, Miss Irvin, I have been so frightened! I never was so horrified but once before in my life: that was two years ago, after a party. I’ll tell you about it.”

“Suppose you wait until morning,” I gently suggested, “and try for the short remainder of the night to obtain a little sleep. Come, dear child, draw that easy chair close up here to my side, and make yourself comfortable in it,—do, there’s a darling.”

“Yes, I may as well make myself comfortable,” she replied, only half comprehending my words; and in a hurried, nervous manner, pulling the aforesaid chair as near as possible to the couch.

I saw she was far too much excited and unsettled in mind and body to allow me to hope anything so desirable as her going to sleep; and, weary and agitated though I was, I had no choice but to submit to, perhaps, hours longer of wakefulness, with

the painful addition of a strained and watchful attention of ear, eye, and brain. How I longed for daylight! And what could be the matter with her! Was it anything so dreadful as actual madness?—or might it only be the effects of a dream?"

"I'll tell you all about it," she again repeated, after assuring herself, by several hasty investigations of the window, that it was just as I told her, and that nothing dangerous or frightful was there. "At the party I speak of we had dancing and music, plenty of gentlemen, plenty of all sorts of fun and amusement; and while in the height of it, word came that a young lady, who had been that evening invited, and was momentarily expected, was dead!—had died suddenly!—no one present could tell of what; we only knew that she was gone from amongst us for ever, and so unexpectedly, too, for she was there only the day before, talking joyously of this very party,—bright, blooming, the picture of health and happiness. I was well acquainted with her, as were also most present; nevertheless, though

all liked her,—for she was a merry, handsome, good-natured girl,—after a general expression of regret at her untimely fate, of some conjecture as to the occasion of it, and many apparently warm professions of sorrow, all went on gaily as before,—dancing, music, talking, laughing, and flirting, and poor Annie Rhodes seemed totally forgotten in a very brief space of time. *I* could not forget her so soon; that death-thought haunted me the whole of the evening afterwards, or rather the whole night. I had just danced a polka, the room was intolerably hot, and my partner, a Captain Vaughan, proposed our going into the conservatory for a little while, to cool ourselves. We walked through it to the further end, and stood at an open door leading into the garden,—the ball-room joined the conservatory. Well, while we were standing there, amusing ourselves with looking at the moon, which was just then throwing its cold, uncertain light upon us, and Captain Vaughan was repeating a poem he had composed, he said, ‘To the Queen of Light and Darkness,’ I all at

once heard, distinctly as you hear me now, Annie's voice calling my name. She seemed close by my side. Oh, how I started! just as if some one had struck me, and turned round and answered her; but nothing was there. Captain Vaughan stopped, and stared, and asked me what was the matter—to whom was I speaking?

"I said, 'Did you not hear her? Why, she was quite close to us, and spoke so loud.'

"'In the name of wonder, who was close to us?' he exclaimed, in a frightened tone.

"'Annie Rhodes,' I told him, angrily. I do not know why I was angry, but somehow I felt vexed with his stupidity, as I thought it. Just then a strange pain shot through my head,—I felt it to-night, too, when that horrid thing came to my cabin window,—and a hand passed slowly over my hair, and then rested there—on my head, I mean—for a minute, and I became cold, oh, cold as death! and I caught hold of Captain Vaughan's arm, and begged him, in an agony of terror, to take that chill,

horrid hand off my head, quick, quick, for I could not bear it! But he protested there was no hand on or near me; it was only my fancy, he said, occasioned by the cold of the open door: I ought not to stand there, and was no doubt catching a chill. Then he took my hand, drew it within his arm, and hurriedly pulled me with him back into the ball-room. I knew very well he saw something, as certainly as I heard and felt something, for his face was white as a sheet when we got to the light; and, putting me on a sofa, he went up to a servant with a tray, and took two or three glasses of wine, and drank them one after another. Then he turned round and stared at me, to see, I was quite positive, whether the hand was still on my head. But it was gone now; and when he had spoken earnestly for a few minutes to Mrs. Brent, the lady of the house, whose daughter was a schoolfellow of mine, and with whom I was spending my holidays, he immediately left the room. He had evidently been speaking of me, for while they stood together they both kept looking

my way; and upon his leaving her, she directly came to me, and said I seemed very tired; and as the party was now nearly over, she thought I had better go up to my room and to bed.

“I do not know why, but dancing and music, and the loud sound of voices, were at that moment hateful to me, so I did as she advised, and went up to my bed-room: I felt no fear of being alone now. When upstairs, I rang for a servant, but none came; so I took off my ball-dress, thinking I would go at once to bed, and, if I could, to sleep, for I was very miserable; but, changing my mind, I sat down instead before the fire to warm myself, for I was still very cold: Annie’s death-hand had left such a chill in my blood. I suppose I must have fallen asleep while sitting there, and did not know what I did, for on becoming again conscious, I found myself standing before the open window, gazing at the moon, which still shone brightly.

“The house was quiet now, and the party certainly all over, and everybody gone.

away. I had become as hot while sleeping as I had before been cold; nevertheless, I stopped for a minute opposite the fast expiring fire. As I stood there, facing the bed, what do you think I saw? I'll tell you,—lowering her voice to a gasping whisper—“a white and ghastly face lying on my pillow and staring at me! I felt as if my very brain was on fire! Presently the faced moved, and a figure slowly sat up; and now I saw it was Annie Rhodes,—and she looked dreadful! Her eyes wide open, but neither life nor light in them,—the eyes of a corpse!—and yet alive, too; and she appeared to want to speak to me, and leaned forward with her mouth open. I could not stop myself: I went quickly to the bedside; and as I did so, what do you think? she suddenly raised a bare, frightful, shadowy arm, the hand holding a dart like a little dagger, which, swift as lightning, she struck into my head! I felt it piercing hot—burning hot—through to the very centre of my brain! After that, I remembered no more till the next morning, when I found myself

lying by the side of the bed on the ground, where, of course, I must have fallen from the effects of that dreadful blow Annie gave me."

"How long ago is it, Sophy, since all this occurred?" I asked.

"Oh, quite a year, I am sure, if not more."

"Well, but dear," I continued, "you did not surely consider it anything more serious than a dream? You must have fallen asleep while sitting on the side of your bed, and—"

"*A dream!*" she loudly and angrily interrupted. "Nothing of the sort, Miss Irvin! How can you talk such nonsense? It was no more a dream than what I saw to-night was so or my being here is so!"

"Do you not see, Sophy," I urged, wishing, if possible, to disabuse her mind of impressions so injurious to her health and intellect; "that if a real dart had entered your head, either death would have been the result, or, at any rate, a large wound, which not only everybody must have perceived,

but which likewise would have taken a long while to doctor and heal?"

"And don't you see, Miss Irvin," replied the excited girl; "don't you consider that it was a spirit I saw? The wound, therefore, was not visible to mortal eyes or touch,—but oh, it was dreadful! and for days after I felt so ill, and had most awful headaches!"

Just then, to my indescribable thankfulness, the cabin-door opened, and Mrs. Graham, dear, ever considerate friend, entered. At the first stir of the door, poor little Sophy sprang from her seat and clung frantically to me, crying, in a low, shuddering voice, "Oh, Miss Irvin! There!—it is coming!—it is coming! Oh, save me! save me!" and some time elapsed ere we could sooth and quiet her agitation. Happily for me, the raised tones of Sophy's voice when narrating her wild story had reached Mary's ear, who instantly hurried in to ascertain the cause of this unseasonable visit, and to see if she could be of use to me. And was she not?

In Sophy's present state of mind, it was out of the question to send her down again that night alone to her cabin, even if she would have gone, which I greatly doubt; and my tender-hearted friend, consulting the comfort and welfare of both Sophy and myself, took the trembling girl back with her into her own cabin, leaving me with an anxious hope that I might now obtain some sleep. She told me the next morning, that having made poor frightened Sophy lie down on the couch,—herself seated in an easy-chair,—she fell asleep almost the moment her pale face pressed the pillow—a heavy, moveless sleep, from which she did not awake until seven o'clock. Her clothes were then brought to her, and, after dressing hastily, and in grave silence,—a very unusual thing with her,—she came to Mrs. Graham's side, and throwing her arms round her, laid her young cheek against hers, warmly and affectionately, then ran out of the cabin.

CHAPTER XXI.

I send you here a sort of allegory
(For you will understand) of a soul,
A sinful soul, possessed of many gifts,
A pretty garden, full of flowering weeds.

Not for this

Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to perfect shape.—A. TENNYSON.

I AWOKE in the morning with a distressing headache, the natural consequence of so disturbed a night. Jenny, who was always irresistibly determined on those points, would not let me get up, but insisted upon my first taking some breakfast. She had already dosed me early with a strong cup of coffee heated with ginger, from the effects of which I at once felt better. As is often the case after a tempestuous night, the morning was calm and beautiful; the winds had

relieved their fierce, wild spirits during the darksome hours, and once more allowed Dame Nature to smile in peace and quiet; but, like one who had been cruelly ill-used, she could not altogether recover her serenity; and the great bosom of the deep still heaved and swelled under the influence, as it were, of irrepressible feelings of indignation at the wrongs inflicted upon her by the merciless storm. Being very anxious about Sophy, I despatched Jenny to inquire concerning her, and to my exceeding relief, and some surprise, she brought me word that the gay damsels was on deck, laughing and talking merrily with a party of gentlemen.

My little woman, whose pity for Sophy I had greatly excited by my previous recital of the poor frantic child's horrors in the dead of night, was incensed beyond measure at her happy condition this morning, while I, poor darling, was lying so ill in bed; my illness caused by that little monkey's cowardice and folly.

"I'll tell you what it is, Miss Kitty," exclaimed the indignant Jenny; "the next

bit of storm there is, I'll bide up with you all night; and if that good-for-nought girl comes again to your cabin with her stories of ghosts and nonsense, I'll just take her up in my arms as she is, and carry her to the captain's cabin, and get him to lock her up in her own for a week. I'll be bound she will never come worritting you again."

Be it known to you, that my valiant little woman was, if anything, shorter than Sophy Brown, and certainly not stronger; and would, in respect of her unsteady footing, have been no match whatever for her reckless and fiery little opponent, who was as regardless of the movements of the vessel as she was of everything else; indeed, the more likely thing was Sophy would have turned the tables and locked up Jenny.

Mary Graham came to my cabin after breakfast. She had seen Sophy, she said, at the cuddy-table, as usual, but looking frightfully pale and ill, and her eyes more wild and unsettled in expression than she had ever observed them before.

"I feel truly sorry for that poor child," continued my gentle friend. "Some great evil is at work, undermining her brain, I feel perfectly convinced. The life of constant excitement in which she lives on board this ship must be dangerously injurious to her unsteady intellect, and will, if permitted to continue, surely produce the most frightful results."

I recounted the strange optical delusions she had told me of the night before, and Mary and I wondered greatly what species of fit she could have fallen into when lying, as she said, on the ground beside the bed. I thought apoplexy, but Mary considered her too young and slight, and altogether too vivacious, to be liable to an attack of that kind.

"Epilepsy was more like it," she said; and, indeed, she might, for aught any one knew to the contrary, be often subject at night to that dreadful disease in a modified form; if so, much which was at times so wild and singular in her conduct could be thus easily and fairly accounted for.

"May I come in?" cried a well-known voice, and without waiting for an answer, Edith's bright, blooming face, peeped in upon us.

"You look like a sunbeam," I observed, smiling.

"And you like a lily of the valley, that will be all the better for a sunbeam upon it," she retorted gaily, and pushing open the curtain, stepped in, and stood contemplating me as I lay.

"Why, Kitty, what in Neptune's name have you been doing with your precious little self?" she at last exclaimed. "You are as white and woe-begone as a dove that has been storm-tossed the whole night, and finally cast on board the 'Bird of Passage'!"

"I had worse to bear than the storm, Edith, I can tell you—judge for yourself." And I gave a description of what I had experienced with Sophy Brown.

"Well," she answered, "I am never surprised now at anything I hear of that crazy young thing, and I feel quite prepared to be told some day that she has made away

with herself. It is extremely disagreeable, I must say, to have such people on board. I really wish her friends had sent her out in another vessel instead of this; certainly she would have been quite as well off in point of chaperonage if she had come by herself."

I shuddered at Edith's words, as I recalled to mind how near the poor child was in the night, while under the influence of excitement and terror, to self-destruction.

"Oh, do not speak lightly on a subject so dreadful!" I said. "If you had only seen and heard the agony of fright she was in at the thought of throwing herself into the water, which some strange mad feeling was impelling her to do, you would pity her—indeed you would."

"I do pity her from my heart and soul, poor little thing!" cried my impetuous friend, her beautiful eyes instantly filling with tears; "and I am sorry I spoke so heedlessly. Notwithstanding all her faults—and they are grave ones—she possesses a deep, warm centre in her wilful heart, and there from the first she unceremoniously

thrust me, as she does all those whom she loves, whether they will or no. Oh, she is a singular little creature! However, come from where they may, affection and gratitude are not plants of such common growth that one can afford to tread them under foot, when fortunate enough to find them in one's path; and I like her, in return, far more than I would willingly confess to the whole freight of charity on board the 'Bird of Passage.' But, to speak more immediately to the purpose, the reason of the sunbeam shining thus early into your cabin is, that you have no idea, ladies both, how cheerful and pleasant it is on deck this morning. Last night's storm has cooled the air, the awning is up all over the vessel, and the sun in tears at sight of the devastations committed by the tempest; consequently, his ardour is so agreeably subdued, that it is possible to open one's eyes comfortably, and enjoy reading or working, or whatever else fancy dictates. So do come up, will you?"

"Will you, Mary, if I do?" I asked, turning to my friend. "Edith's description is so

tempting to my hot, aching head and feverish feelings, I think I should like it this morning, and it might do me good."

Mrs. Graham readily agreed, and returned to her own cabin while I dressed, Edith kindly rushing off to find Jenny and send her to me.

CHAPTER XXII.

Love the sea? I dote upon it from the beach. Taste was never meant to be accounted for, I suppose, else there's a lot of us would have a good deal to answer about. Taste, in some things, I suppose, was given to us to do what we like with, but now and then we do dangerously abuse the privilege.—D. JERROLD.

Thou, too, poor youth! thou art pass'd away
Without thy fame in life's fair dawning day.

ALL points answered exactly to Edith's account. The open deck was really charming, the usually fierce noonday sunshine was greatly softened, and the glare commonly thrown back from the water, as though reflected in a sea of looking-glass, was this morning quite endurable. It all looked pretty and blithe, for more than half of the passengers were up there, the majority ladies, who, in their light summer dresses, and little jaunty hats and feathers, were

grouped about in every part: some on chairs, some down on the deck, and many others standing by the ship's side, or sitting in the stern; which latter was two feet or so higher than the rest of the deck. Laughing and talking went on everywhere; and my spirits became so pleasantly influenced by the sights and sounds around me, that in a very short time I really felt far more like a younger sister of the Kate Irvin who had just left her cabin than that individual herself. The moment Mary Graham and I appeared, Sophy, who was playing about with little fat Jessy, flew to my side, and taking my hand in both hers, the warmest affection beaming upon me from her brilliant eyes, with tender assiduity helped me to my chair.

"I am so glad you are come up, Miss Irvin! It is delightful this morning, is it not?" she exclaimed, in all her usual joyousness of manner—not a trace of last night's mad terror and intense distress visible in her now flushed face and eager, childlike expression. I doubted even whether she remem-

bered what had passed between us so recently, and as she made no allusion to the subject, I considered it best to let it remain—if so it were—forgotten by her. Edith was standing with a little party—Captain Beaufort, Alice Hall, and the young Lieutenant, Mr. Garston—by the ship's side, looking at the heaving waters, but at sight of Mary and me, came and placed herself on a low cushion at my feet; and the gallant Captain, who, I regretted to see, was so continually her devoted cavalier, followed her example, and cast himself on the boards by her side, albeit he made many strange faces, protesting that “By Jupiter, it was a preciously hard place to lie upon! and there was but one person in the world whose smiles had power to soften such a penance into a pleasure.”

Edith's conscious laugh and blush proved clearly that she knew well to whom he referred as the one person whose smiles were so potent. At that moment a tightening clasp of Sophy's hands, which rested on my lap, and still retained my own within them, the while she knelt beside me, attracted my

attention. It was one of the many peculiarities of this wayward girl, that, excepting at meal times, she rarely sat down. She lounged or knelt on the floor often enough for a minute or two, but rationally to seat herself on a chair for the purpose of conversation and rest, seemed an act as foreign to her strange nature as for a swallow or a lark to perch upon a tree. When I looked at her now the expression of her face quite startled me. Her cheeks had become pale as death, her teeth closely set, and a wild fierce glare was in her dark eyes, as she glanced alternately at Edith and Captain Beaufort. She seemed, I thought, to be actually meditating a spring at the gentleman's throat; and bending over her, and pressing her hand to recall her to a consciousness of her actions, I whispered gently,—

“What is the matter, dear? Why do you look so angry?”

Her countenance softened beautifully for a second as she looked up at me; then kissing my hand with a hasty, abstracted air, she

turned again to the (to me unaccountably) offending couple.

“Who is the ‘only one person in the world’ you allude to, Captain Beaufort?” asked Sophy at last, in a tone of concentrated meaning, almost of fury.

The gentleman started, and looked up quickly, and I was amazed at the effect which her words and manner produced upon him. Instead of treating the pert question, as most of the other gentlemen on board would have done, as something to laugh at and reply to with a joke, he suddenly sat up, for at the time he was stretched full-length on the deck, with his shoulders partly raised, resting on one arm, the better to stare at and talk to Edith—and apparently at a loss for an answer, his countenance expressed a degree of nervous apprehension, that seemed totally uncalled for by so simple a query.

“Upon my word, Miss Brown,” he commenced; then checked himself, as, with a hasty glance, he met her wild restless eyes defiantly flashing upon him; and coming to the conclusion, whatever his reason, that his

wisest plan was to make no answer, he abruptly changed the subject by asking Sophy to promise him her hand for the first dance that evening, as he had heard, he said, there was to be another entertainment given in favour of all the "light fantastic toes" on deck by moonlight.

"Yes," replied Sophy, in a slow, meaning voice, "I'll dance with you, for I have something to say to you."

Captain Beaufort laughed awkwardly, and with unmistakable relief that the matter had, for the present, terminated so peacefully; for Sophy, seeming contented to postpone the answer to her question until the evening, did not press further for it now, and he returned again to his recumbent posture, carefully avoiding, however, any marked notice of Edith, as if he feared again to excite Sophy's wrath against him.

Whether that fiery little damsel would have permitted her evidently jealous anger to subside so readily, had it not chanced that Mr. Campbell just then joined our party, I cannot say. She still continued firmly

clasping my hand, and her incensed glowing eyes roamed from one face to another in an unsettled disagreeable way ; at the same time, I was surprised and sorry to see a look of keen pain coming into her brow and features—mental, not bodily pain : I had never seen it there before. Can it be possible that she really loves that man ? I thought.

“ Mr. Campbell, I perceive a book in your hand,” cried Edith. “ I hope it is a presage of coming amusement in the form of an entertaining story, to be read aloud by your reverend self, for the especial refreshment of our minds during this hot weather, our hands being, as you see, most laboriously occupied. Miss Irvin is working some tatting-borders, Mrs. Graham a lace-collar, and I—well, I don’t quite know yet what mine is to be, but think a footstool, or a cushion, or something of that useful nature.”

“ I second the motion, Reverend Sir,” rejoined Captain Beaufort ; “ with this proviso, however, that it be not a sermon.”

“ This book is the account of a ‘ Six Months’ Residence in Cape Town and its

Environs,'" replied Mr. Campbell, smiling gravely. "Captain Henley predicts our arrival there in about a fortnight, or less; but that is as it may be. However, it is very pleasant and useful to be made acquainted with the history of places one stops at, and so—"

"Oh, by all means!" interrupted Edith, eagerly. "I do not know anything about the Cape myself, excepting that the delicious Constantia wine comes from there; and everybody makes a point of driving out to Constantia to drink it, and eat nice little cakes, and see the great wine vaults. Do you possess more knowledge on the subject, Kitty? But I have no doubt you do, for you are a clever little body, and know most things, in spite of your being so quiet and silent."

We all laughed, and I blushed, saying, "I have certainly chanced to hear a good deal regarding the Cape, but fear my information is not of a very trustworthy sort—I mean, it did not come from a source to be safely depended upon. It was given to me

by an invalid officer; he was on sick leave from India at the time of his stay at the Cape. I do not intend to imply that he willingly said what was untrue, but I think ill health often has the effect of prejudicing the feelings and warping the judgment; and places might therefore have made a disagreeable impression upon him, which to others would possibly be pleasant enough."

"Well, it is very honest in you to say that, Miss Irvin," observed Mr. Campbell, smiling kindly.

"Oh, Miss Irvin is always honest," exclaimed Sophy, with marked vehemence. "I know that everything *she* says is true; and no matter how false all others are, I am certain of finding sincerity in her."

These words were accompanied by an angry accusing glance at Captain Beaufort, who wisely affected not to perceive it.

"Well, Kitty, let us judge for ourselves how far your account is to be depended upon," cried Edith. "We will hear you first, and Mr. Campbell's book after, and see how near the two accounts agree with each other."

"And if they walk so much asunder as to hold no friendly connexion," interrupted Captain Beaufort, "we will adopt the opinions of neither, but steer between; and if, upon personal experience, we discover that both are wrong, will dismiss them altogether, and set up a fresh code of our own, which shall be benevolently presented to the public in the shape of a work resembling the one now in my reverend friend's hands."

"Declaring at the same time," continued Edith, laughing, "that our dear readers may fully depend upon the correctness of the statements therein contained, and warning them that all other accounts are mere impositions, as we have found to our cost."

"Are we to have any dancing on deck, to-night?" interrupted Sophy, turning to Mr. Campbell. "I mean, do you know whether it is a settled thing?"

"I really take so little interest in those matters, my dear young lady," he replied, "that I cannot inform you more decidedly on the point than you probably know

already. I have heard rumours of an intended ball, but that is all."

"Sophy, be still, there's a good child, and let us now hear something about the Cape, as we are so soon to be there," petitioned Edith.

"God willing!" added Mr. Campbell, in a gently reproving tone.

Edith blushed and smiled, while a corrected look came into her bright face; and at that moment Major Manvers, accompanied by his cousin Fanny, came towards us, and selecting Mary from amongst the many ladies present—Lucy Frere was also near, reading, as usual—asked her to join himself and niece in a short walk, at the same time offering his disengaged arm. With thanks she accepted his proposal. I was glad she thus had the opportunity of taking a little exercise, for I was still suffering too much from headache to venture upon more than sitting quietly on the deck, and could not propose myself in mutual support. No matter how rough the movements of the vessel, two persons could always walk together, but under no circumstance did one—at least, a

lady—attempt a promenade alone, even could she effect such a thing in defiance of the laws of marine locomotion. The act would have been denounced as strange and bold in the extreme. So much for the capriciousness of propriety.

“Well, do let us get on about the Cape, or we shall hear nothing more of it to-day, I am afraid,” exclaimed Captain Beaufort, impatiently. “Come, Miss Irvin, you being a lady ought to take precedence; so please give us your friend’s version first. By the by, is he a married man?”

I thought the question rude and irrelevant, especially as he laid a good deal of stress upon the words.

Mr. Campbell glanced hastily at me as I replied, “He was not married when at the Cape, but is so now.”

“Ah!” continued Captain Beaufort—(how I did wonder what Edith could see to like in that man, handsome though he was!)—“that makes a mighty difference in a fellow’s feelings towards places and things. Of all creatures in this cold, hard world, none are so

thoroughly wretched as we poor bachelors when sickness or trouble comes upon us, and no mortal near to care whether we die or live. We set off in life, the wide world before us —health, hope, and ambition within us, together with a large amount of ignorance of all the danger, difficulty, and sorrow we shall have in one shape or other to encounter, backed by youth's reckless indifference concerning that we do know, and might, with a little common care and prudence, avoid ; firmly believing, when we think of the matter at all, which is very seldom, that our happiness and success are entirely in our own hands. But, by Jove! a very few years' experience teaches us the folly of that, and we soon learn to know that all our real comfort is to be looked for at the hands of weak woman. Things go on tolerably well and jolly so long as our health and energy last and our plans succeed. When those forsake us—bah! it is too melancholy to think of. But let there be a lovely and loving wife at hand, with her knowledge of domestic delights, of rightful dues of which the lone man

is ever defrauded, of home comforts; her woman's tact and keen perception of justice and imposture; and over, within, and around all, her strong, enduring, self-sacrificing love—Hey! Presto! How the scene changes!"

"Upon my word, Beaufort," interrupted Colonel Thornley, who had joined our party during the gallant Captain's concluding speech, "it is really too bad in you to be placing such a dainty feast before the eyes of a set of poor hungry wretches, condemned by their folly or their misfortunes to feed only on bread and water! I wonder some consideration for your own dreary lot does not restrain you."

"Restrain me!" repeated Captain Beaufort, laughing. "Why, that is the very thought driving me on—driving me almost to self-destruction—to anything!" he added, in a low tone, close to Edith, but without looking at her.

"Yes, even to *marriage*," scoffed Sophy, in a loud voice.

Colonel Thornley had chosen, to my annoyance, to gaze fixedly at me while he

spoke, and I felt angry with myself for colouring under his embarrassing regards. Then he came and sat next to me, in the chair vacated by Mrs. Graham. Captain Beaufort, notwithstanding his eager anxiety before to hear of the Cape, chose now to continue the wife subject, saying,—

“A friend of mine told me a miserable story a short time ago, which exactly bears on the point in question, and which I constantly think of with horror.”

“What is it? Do tell me!” broke in Sophy, with such vehemence of tone and manner that we all started and stared at her.

“Well, what do you see to look at?” she asked, angrily. “Did you not hear him say he always thought of it with *horror?*”

“Horror was, perhaps, too strong a term to use on the present occasion, Miss Sophy,” replied Captain Beaufort, in a soft, propitiatory tone. “What I should more properly say is, that the recollection never returns to my mind without bringing with it very uncomfortable sensations that some sad day—

possibly sooner than I anticipate—the same wretched fate may be my own."

"Tell us," said Edith, in a low, sympathizing voice.

"Last summer," commenced the gentleman, giving a bright and hasty glance at the fair petitioner, "I was staying on a visit with friends in the North of England, and there, singularly enough, met an old acquaintance, whom I had not seen for years. He was a kind-hearted fellow, always ready to do a good-natured turn for any one, consequently, wherever he went, a universal favourite. He had just returned from India, where he left his regiment, and was, he said, weary of his single uncared-for life, so he intended in double quick time to provide himself with a wife to take back with him to the East. We were all sitting together over our wine one evening,—he and I and two or three others, the ladies having retired to the drawing-room,—when it chanced that the same subject was broached between us that has now formed part of our conversation, namely, the dreary condition of us poor bachelors.

“ ‘I can never forget,’ observed my old friend Forrest, ‘a melancholy circumstance which occurred to me the last time I stopped at the Cape on my way home. In the hotel at which I put up, was likewise staying a young fellow, an officer, going out for the first time to India to join his regiment. From what I afterwards learned it seemed that he had always been delicate, and his friends, considering it the wisest thing they could do, sent him to live for some years in a country where it is supposed that people can exist with but half a lung. Certainly, to my knowledge, consumptive patients preserve their lives there who would die in a month’s time exposed to the damp, foggy climate of Old England. However, poor fellow, *he* was not destined to make the experiment. During the voyage he became so ill, that when the vessel reached the Cape, it was deemed necessary to leave him there until in some degree recovered, when he was to follow in another ship, belonging to the same owners, and without additional passage-money—such being the rule in cases of sickness.

“ ‘ The first night I spent on land, my sleep was miserably disturbed by the incessant hollow coughing and suppressed moaning of poor Seward—that was the sick fellow’s name—in the bedroom next to my own. The following night he was even worse; not one moment’s rest did he have—his cough was violent enough to tear him to pieces. Often I heard him speaking in a mournful, faltering voice, but as no reply ever came, concluded that he was by himself, and I could stand it no longer. Two o’clock was striking, as, springing out of bed, I groped my way in the dark to his room. The door was shut; I opened it softly and looked in. Never shall I forget the dismal scene that met my eyes. The room—a rather small one—was all but in total darkness, for the miserable tallow candle, standing on a table opposite a large hearse-like bed, was fast guttering out, and the suffocating vapour arising from it filled the whole room. While I lingered at the door, looking at the poor fellow’s white, anxious face and glittering eyes, as he lay there helplessly staring at the flickering light,

I was struck with the truth of the mournful simile of departing life's resemblance to an expiring candle. The next instant I advanced to the bed, when the sick man instantly exclaimed in a loud voice, "Oh, Philip, Philip! why did you leave me? Oh! why have you stayed away all this night, when you knew I was so ill?"

"I spoke to him, told my name, and explained the reason of my coming in, and asked whether I could be of any assistance. "Oh, thank you! thank you! God bless you!" he cried out. "Yes, oh, give me air and water! I am dying of suffocation and thirst."

"I opened wide the window. What was the use now, I thought, of debarring the unhappy boy—for he was little more—of the pure fresh air? Then I turned round to go back for my own candle, which was beside my bed, but no sooner did poor Seward notice the movement, than he startled me by the dismal shriek he gave, as in wailing tones of unutterable misery he implored me not to leave him again alone to die.

“Oh ! Major Forrest,” he continued, “if you only knew, as I do, what it is to be prostrated by a mortal sickness in a foreign land, in a dreary room like this, without a living being to speak to, or care for you, but the cowardly black fellow who so remorselessly left me to-night, because I told him I did not think I should live till morning ! Oh ! as you hope for mercy yourself—” here he broke down, half choked with his painful cough. As you may suppose, I instantly returned to his side, and said all I could to re-assure him. Ill though he was, wasted and worn, I saw he was a fine young fellow, and his pallid, woe-begone face and despairing words wrung my very heart-strings. Hastily I promised that I would not leave him while I remained at the Cape ; and the expression of gratitude which, like that wretched candle every now and then flaring out on the table before us, blazed up into his death-bright eyes, will never leave my memory. With a deep-drawn sigh of relief he sank back on his pillow again, from which, in the extremity of his distress, he had, in

spite of his weakness, raised himself, and I hurried away for another light. Coming back I threw the other, candlestick and all, into the street. Afterwards I gave him water to drink. My God! how he grasped at it! No poor wretch who had lain for days dying on the sands of Arabia could have clutched it with more frantic eagerness.”

Upon this second irreverent mention of God’s sacred name—I omitted the first—Mr. Campbell looked up quickly, and in a gentle but firm voice said,—

“ Captain Beaufort, I am sure you are too good-tempered to be offended at my interrupting you; but I must make it my earnest request that you will not again, during your sad tale, profanely use your Maker’s name. I would petition you, for your own sake, never to do so; though in the present instance I beg you to avoid it principally on account of your young lady auditors,—also of myself, to whom everything of the kind is painfully unpleasant.”

Captain Beaufort, slightly confused and rather angry, nevertheless laughed good-

humouredly enough, and bowing round to us ladies, and to Mr. Campbell, with an expression half pique, half amusement, lightly apologized, saying,—

“ I beg you to excuse me, but the fact is I strove so carefully to repeat word for word the story as it was told me by my friend, feeling that I might mar but could not improve upon the recital, that I quite forgot the character of my auditors in the midst of my melancholy detail, and in imagination was again sitting in my host’s hospitable dining-room, surrounded by the jolly companions of that bygone hour, who, I must in justice to myself add, were unfortunately perhaps too much addicted to the rough mode of speech reprehended by my reverend friend,” again slightly bowing to Mr. Campbell; “ but I will be more careful,” and he glanced hastily at Edith.

Mr. Campbell was silent. He looked grave, and I saw that both the matter and the manner of the excuse pained him. Had not Edith been present, I do not think Captain Beaufort would have felt either hurt

or annoyed at so mild and proper a reproof coming from a man like Mr. Campbell, whose own Christian rectitude of character, and self-sacrificing life in the service of his fellow creatures, supported and enforced as it was by a remarkably sweet and benevolent temper, had won for him the esteem of all on board, high and low. Even amongst the most reckless of the passengers was the holy and purifying influence of his presence beginning to be felt, for as my careless but right-thinking friend Edith justly quoted, "People took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus."

I am tempted to make this little digression in favour of Mr. Campbell, first, and perhaps principally, because I entertained towards him a feeling amounting almost to veneration. His many noble qualities, and especially the moral courage which impelled him always to stand forward in defence of religion, of the honour of his Divine Master, and the cause of his fellow creatures, had gradually won my high esteem and admiration.

But to return to Captain Beaufort's story.

"Well, as I was saying," he continued; "my old friend Forrest gave the poor fellow water to drink, then sat down beside him.

"Major Forrest!" he suddenly exclaimed, in clearer tones than he had yet spoken in, "tell me the honest truth, do you think I am dying?"

"He looked so dolefully eager and anxious for my answer," continued my friend, "that I could not, for the life of me, bear to say what I really thought,—that with that dreadful cough, the constant spitting of blood, and the short, tight breathing, his very hours were numbered. He instantly perceived my reluctance to reply.

"I see you do," he added, despairingly; and after a pause said, in a hollow, mournful voice, "Oh, you know not, God grant you may never know, what a fearful feeling it is that you are dying, far away from all you love, from all that is familiar to you, in a strange land, and not one of the faces so precious to your heart and memory, within thousands and thousands of miles,

and knowing that you will never again see them in this world!"

"He stopped speaking, and panted heavily for a few seconds. I longed to comfort him, but knew not what to say ; and while trying to think of something, he continued more quickly,—

"I cannot tell you how painfully some silly lines I once read years ago in my schooldays, have lately returned to my recollection, and now haunt my mind ; there is nothing in them worth remembering—they are even puerile ; these are the lines :—

Rattle his bones
Over the stones,
He's only a stranger whom nobody owns.

Every time I fall into a feverish sleep, I seem to hear repeated close to my ears those forlorn words, 'Rattle his bones over the stones.' Oh, how little I dreamed then, in my happy boyhood, when laughing at those rhymes, that they would ever apply to myself!"

"Poor fellow ! he was very young, and, overcome by his feelings and bodily weak-

ness, he covered his face with his thin hands, and wept like a woman. I said all I could to comfort and soothe him, but it was but little I could say to any purpose. I considered that it would be cruel to tell him I thought he would not die, when it was evident even to my inexperienced eyes, that his very minutes, like the last sands of an hour-glass, were fast running out, and if he wished to send a parting message of love and remembrance to those at home, now was his only opportunity; for willingly would I undertake to deliver it. In a short time, recovering himself, he laid his hand on mine, and in a quivering voice, said,—

“ Eight weeks ago, I left England for the first time in my life; I also left two beings whom I love better than all else in the world —a mother and sister. Poor, sweet little Jessy! She and I were playfellows in our childhood, and have always been the warmest friends and companions. Oh, as I lie here hour after hour in this dreary, desolate place, seeing no faces but the pale, melancholy one of my doctor, and the black one of my un-

feeling and careless attendant, the recollections of those pleasant bygone days come rushing in a tide of thoughts over my heart, lingering, as it were, within and around me, like dying cadences of sweet, far-off music—so mournful! I have longed at such moments that death would come at once and end my misery. . . . Major Forrest,” he exclaimed, hurriedly, “you will, I know, do a last kind act for me?”

“‘Anything in my power,’ I answered.

“‘Will you bring that table and candle close to the side of the bed? I cannot speak loud, and I feel—I feel I must be quick if I would do what I desire before I die.”

“‘I did as he requested; then he pointed to the chest of drawers, saying, “And now please,”—but he seemed unable to go on: a spasm passed over his handsome features; he was evidently striving to gulp down some overpowering feeling, and to recover his manliness. Poor boy! even in these, his last hours, he was ashamed that I should witness what he considered his weakness: however, in a moment or two, he continued,

“I’m very weak, and you must pity and excuse me—I have been an invalid, more or less, all my life, and accustomed to be lovingly cared for: that desk, which I want you to bring to the table, was one my dear little sister gave me years ago, and it is full of her letters.”

“I brought the desk to the light, and, with eager, trembling hands, young Seward gave me the key, which was on his watch-chain.

“Now—if you will kindly write,” he continued, hurriedly,—“paper, ink, and pens,—everything is there.”

“His manner and voice were becoming so excited, that I feared he would not hold out long enough to complete what he wished; and remembering that my medicine-chest contained some restoratives, I told him my intention, went to my room, and speedily brought him a soothing draught, which, for a time, had the desired effect. He then dictated a short and affectionate letter to his mother, taking care to conceal from her all the misery he had endured during these his last days on earth; striving to comfort her

by the assurance—and I am convinced it was the truth—that her many gentle lessons of piety had been, in this his fatal illness, the one only consolation and support of his departing hours. He persisted in making frequent grateful allusions to myself, which, upon my objecting to, he affirmed would afford so much cheering support to his beloved mother under her heavy affliction, that I could not refuse to say what he wished. This finished, I directed the envelope and inclosed it; and now, at his request, I commenced another to his sister. Strangely enough, he was more distressed in writing to her than to his mother. By this time, too, he was so ghastly white, and coughed so incessantly, that I feared the room, though to me still very close and hot, was becoming too cold for his diseased lungs. I felt his hand; it was cold and damp,—the very touch, so deathlike, thrilled through me—and I proposed shutting the window. This, in a weak voice, he earnestly opposed, and again I reluctantly resumed my distressing task. I wrote as he slowly dictated, “Dearest

sister, my own and only darling, these are the last words you will ever receive from your old playfellow and brother—" I waited, for he here stopped, and I looked down the while on the affectionate words I had written. As he did not again speak, I raised my eyes and saw to my sincere sorrow that he was dying. They were literally "the last words" his poor sister ever received from him."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Whether the day its wonted course renewed,
Or midnight vigils wrapt the world in shade,
Her tender task assiduous she pursued
To soothe my trouble, or my wants to aid.

Nay, think and look upon a child,
As full of childish ways,
Of careless play, of frolics wild,
Of words of joy and praise.

It was not without great difficulty that I maintained sufficient composure to enable me to hear to the end this melancholy tale. There was much in it which, with painful keenness, came home to my own case and feelings; and for some reason, no doubt connected with Edith, Captain Beaufort seemed resolved that the recital should lose nothing in the telling. I valiantly struggled against making a scene, and succeeded in

suppressing my tears, but my agitation absolutely requiring an outlet in some way, I, at the concluding words, "He was dying," which I had been dreading to hear, fainted away, and should have fallen upon the deck, had not Mr. Campbell caught me in his arms, and so, probably, saved me from severe injury. When again restored to consciousness, I found myself on the couch in my cabin, and the kind, anxious faces of Mrs. Graham and Jenny bending over me. Edith and Sophy were standing outside the door,—not allowed to come in for fear of crowding and heating my small cabin. I felt very much ashamed of having thus exposed my weakness and occasioned such trouble, but my cough—the sure consequence of any agitation—coming on the moment I attempted to speak, with the intention of excusing myself, I was abruptly brought up by Jenny, who laid her faithful hand upon my mouth, and silenced me. She then doctorially administered a soothing draught, after which, in a few minutes, I fell asleep.

The loud ringing of a bell awoke me, and

the first sight that gladdened my opening eyes was the sweet smile of Mary Graham. She was sitting near the foot of my sofa, quietly working.

"There's the dinner-bell!" cried I, "and I am not ready."

Mary soon undeceived me: it was the tea-bell, and I had been sleeping nearly all day.

"And now, dear," continued my friend, "you must have something to eat," rising as she spoke to go in search of Jenny.

Fortunately, at that instant the latter came to the door, and finding her darling wide awake, forthwith sped away to bring her all sorts of refreshment.

Mary insisted that as the weather was still very hot, I should lie quietly until I had had my tea; and, taking up her work again, sat down. She would not leave me to get her own tea until Jenny returned, and began giving me a brief account of an interview she had held with Sophy in her, Mrs. Graham's, cabin after dinner.

'She told me she was anxious to know

whether the poor girl's distressing dream of the night before still rested on her mind; for, if so, she wished to make a proposal to which she hoped Sophy would agree.

"Exceedingly indignant," Mary said, "that the mental delusion she had laboured under should be regarded merely as a dream, Sophy angrily declared, with sparkling eyes, that 'if any one but ourselves doubted her, she would make them repent it, that she would!' I told her I did not, in truth, consider it a dream, but thought it best that she should try and believe it so; however, as she was determined not to look upon it in that light, I would avoid vexing her again on the subject. Poor little thing! her passion always quickly yields before one kind word from those she likes, and whom she knows mean well by her; and when I made her an offer to share my cabin at night for the present, her face quite beautified under the influence of the bright warm feeling of gratitude which illumined her features. I said she should sleep on the couch, and I would settle myself very comfortably

on the easy chair, which, during this hot weather, was as agreeable to me as the sofa."

"‘Oh, no,’ she unselfishly protested, ‘nothing should induce her to take my bed. What could I think of her? No, she would sleep on the chair to-night—she would like it very much!’

“I conversed on different subjects with her for some time, though ‘conversed’ is perhaps too steady a word to use in reference to any conversation carried on with so wild and restless a creature. Not for more than two minutes or so would she remain still, sometimes sitting on the floor amusing herself by allowing the movements of the vessel to tumble and roll her about, then kneeling by my side holding my hand, and laying her soft cheek upon it, the next instant springing away to place herself close to the window, where she kept me in a fever lest the efforts she was making to look up to the deck should precipitate her into the sea. I begged her to give up so dangerous a sport, and oblige me by trying to sit quietly while I

was speaking to her, for she distressed me by what she was doing.

“ ‘Well, I won’t then, dear Mrs. Graham,’ she exclaimed; ‘I’ll be as still as a puss on a wall,’ placing herself again on the cushion at my feet. ‘Now we will talk gravely and sensibly as a couple of parsons discussing some knotty point in theology; but no, not parsons, they always quarrel over an argument, and fight, and hate each other and everybody who differs from them in opinion.’

“ Just then our intercourse was brought to a close by Miss Smith, who seems to have conceived a sort of fancy for Sophy, tapping at the door and asking her to come upon deck, upon which the latter jumped from her seat with a relieved and joyful look, and pressing a warm but very hasty kiss on my cheek, unceremoniously rushed away to join her friend.”

“ Poor Sophy, she is the most singular mixture of sense and folly I ever met with,” I said; “ but did she seem at all glad of your kind proposal? Was she willing to

accept it? I should think she would be rejoiced beyond expression, remembering, as I do, the state of mad terror and distress she was in last night. How truly kind of you to make it, dear Mary! Just like you!"

"Well, dear, indeed I cannot say that Sophy's manner impressed me with the idea that she was particularly pleased by the proposal. I do not mean to imply that there was any want of gratitude on her part—far from that; but I suspect she fears that she would have to be regular in her hours, night and morning; and neat and orderly in her dress and arrangements, which would be extremely irksome to one of her careless habits. Be that as it may, however, she only consented to share my cabin to-night, thanking me, at the same time, in her own pretty graceful way; and she was unquestionably glad so far to take advantage of my offer, but nothing further."

I did not like to confess, even to myself, how much this contradictory conduct in Sophy worried and distressed me. Was she

encouraging any idea of self-destruction ? I thought. I had myself proposed to her during the night before to allow me to request Mrs. Hall to desire her ayah to sleep for the future on the ground in her cabin, but she vehemently protested against this, declaring that the sight of the old woman's hideous black face at night would of itself frighten her out of her wits.

Jenny brought in a tray covered with dainty viands and confectionery, chicken, tongue, curry, mashed potatoes, custard-pudding, strawberry-tart, and other matters which I forgot; in fact, a regular dinner: evidently she thought she could not bring me too much. Fortunately for dear old Jenny's peace of mind, my long sleep had so refreshed and strengthened me, and so nearly cured my headache, that I felt quite hungry, and enjoyed amazingly the sight of these nice things. To my satisfaction, too, she had brought Mrs. Graham's cup of tea and biscuit.

"That's a good little body!" I cried; you know how to make me happy. Now,

see the havoc I shall make amongst this good fare ! ”

Jenny smiled lovingly upon me, and having settled us both comfortably to her heart’s content, left us to our quiet enjoyment.

“ Had you a pleasant little walk with Major Manvers this morning ? ” I asked, while commencing my threatened attack on the viands before me.

“ Well, yes, he is a gentlemanly man at all times ; good birth and habit, I suppose, make him that. He is also very agreeable, when so inclined ; has seen a good deal of the world ; seems well informed on subjects most useful in general conversation, and skilful in adapting himself to the style and tastes of his hearers. I knew he had been quartered for some months with his regiment in Calcutta, and was anxious to learn from so certain a source all I could of the place. To my surprise, and indeed his own, I found that he was acquainted with my sister, who is married and residing there ; he had even been to some parties at her house.”

I had never liked to ask Mary Graham any questions concerning her private history, feeling I had no right to do so, and fearing to distress her; now, however, that she had of her own accord entered upon the subject, I thought I might venture to go on with it.

"I am so glad, dear Mary, that you have a married sister in Calcutta. It will be infinitely pleasanter for you than going to a place with none but strangers to meet you, like that poor young Mr. Seward; no one to care whether you live or die."

"Had I been with you, I would not have allowed you to stay and hear that wretched story, Kitty; however, we will not talk upon the subject any more. Yes, dear Lucy's love is indeed precious to me; the possession of a beloved and loving sister is a great blessing, and it is all that I have left worth living for. You may remember, Kitty, in the melancholy account I gave you of my sad story, I mentioned a sister—my sister Lucy: this is the same. She married almost directly after I did, two years ago—four from that fatal day of sorrow to myself. She

married a physician of great eminence in Calcutta. He had returned on a visit to his friends in England, where at the house of one of them she met him. His personal appearance particularly pleased me. He had that handsome, honest, open countenance which impresses the mind at once with the unmistakable conviction of being in the presence of a truly benevolent, honourable man. There was an objection, however, which at the time I feared might ultimately produce evil consequences, the great disparity in their ages—she being only nineteen, two years younger than myself, while he was forty-eight or fifty; but, judging by their letters, especially from Lucy's, who is of a more demonstrative nature than her husband, no two people could be happier, for her naturally joyous disposition does not seem to have contracted one grave or disappointed feeling. With the sanction—indeed the wish—of Dr. Barlow, she wrote to entreat me to come out and live with them. I have no child—my home was wretched! miserable! I may not be doing what is right, but

Heaven in its justice judges not as we judge, and knows how terribly I was driven to act as I am doing. I could not have borne it longer—I should have gone mad or died. But I must not thus selfishly distress you with any more painful recitals; you have suffered quite enough in that way to-day, I am sure, and—”

An abrupt rap at the door stopped Mary and also myself, just as I was on the point of begging her to confide all her sorrows to me, her sympathizing friend.

A voice which I did not recognize accompanied the rap, asking permission to come in, the request being made more in the tone of a command than a petition; and the next instant, to my extreme surprise, Mrs. Hall swept forward, followed by her daughter. Civilities of a not very genial character having passed between us, they, at my request, sat down. The lady mother's cold, self-righteous face looked, I thought, more than usually stern and hard, as she at once opened upon the business which, she informed me with a proud bend of her head, was the

cause of her thus intruding upon me. I am sorry to say I entertained too unchristian a dislike to this harsh, unnatural woman, to feel inclined to make any polite reply, and merely bowing in answer to her excuse, she continued,—

“I have heard a report, Miss Irvin, which was this morning going the round of the vessel, that Miss Brown was seen wandering about during the night, and that coming to your cabin she frightened you nearly to death, and occasioned your illness to-day. Now, as to this belief of her being mad, I consider it the height of folly to suppose such a thing: she is no more mad than I am! but the truth is,”—and here the incensed lady spoke in great, yet suppressed wrath,—“Sophy Brown is a wicked girl—an utterly incorrigible little creature! And I feel no doubt on my mind that she was going about the ship in the dark to play some mischievous trick.”

“I knocked twice, but as you did not hear me, I have taken the liberty of coming in sans cérémonie,” exclaimed the cheerful, honest voice of Edith, which broke in strangely,

but very pleasantly, upon the fierce concentrated tones of Mrs. Hall.

“Oh! you know you are always welcome, dear Edith!” I answered; feeling very glad at that moment of her independent outspeaking support.

Alice Hall, who, totally unlike her mother in temper, was always gentle and pleasing, instantly rose from her seat at the foot of my couch, and, begging Edith to take her place, seated herself on a stool by her mother’s side. The smallness of the cabins—excepting those in the stern, which latter none but good sailors should think of taking, on account of the ship’s movements being doubly felt at that point—did not admit of more than the usual complement of two chairs: one large, soft, and easy; the other principally for the deck, long-backed, low-seated, and with short projecting legs—a style of chair which was a match for almost any amount of rolling and pitching.

“As I was saying,” resumed Mrs. Hall,—and it struck me that there was a decided lowering in her tone and manner since Edith’s

entrance upon the scene,—“I am convinced that she was going about the vessel in the dark from some malicious motive. No wonder, indeed, that people think her mad! Now what I wish to propose is,” she continued quickly, seeing I was on the point of speaking, “that such being the case, strenuous endeavours be made to have her locked up in her own cabin for the remainder of the voyage; for her own sake, as also out of consideration to the feelings of the passengers, it ought to be done. I would allow her to take an hour’s exercise every day on deck—half an hour in the morning and half in the evening.”

“And do you think you would ever get her back again?” interrupted Edith, smiling.

“I should not be so absurd as to think of permitting her a choice, Miss Grant,” replied the austere lady. “From the moment of her coming out of her cabin until her return to it, my very kind friend, Mr. Hobson, has promised me that he will keep her in charge.”

I am sorry to say I was as utterly unable to restrain a sudden burst of merriment at

hearing of this arrangement of Mr. Hobson's as was Edith. I have not before alluded to him, and will do so now—not that I or any other passenger on board the "Bird of Passage" knew who or what he was. He never spoke of his affairs that I am aware of, nor said what position he held in England or intended to fill in India. We girls had, one and all, arrived at the conclusion he was "Joe Smith," the Mormon, and had undertaken this voyage for the sole purpose of entrapping and in India making converts to his Salt Lake principles. In appearance he was tall, and though not positively fat, there was a sleek, well-fed look about him, suggestive to our young eyes of a very decided love of the good things of this world, which, in conjunction with a broad, flat face, flabby skin, thick lips, snub nose, large, vacant, light eyes, and short-cropped rusty-brown hair, made him an object of intense disgust to every damsel in the ship, with the exception, perhaps, of Alice Hall. Being accustomed, to submit her will and opinions implicitly to her mother's, it was almost impossible to

ascertain her real feelings on any point. The manners of this gentleman were as little pleasing as was his person, particularly to our criticizing girls' eyes, which quickly detected, beneath his specious cat-like deportment, a suppressed fierceness when offended, a savage glare in his greenish-grey eyes, which reminded us of the wild animals in the Zoological Gardens.

Mr. Hobson's anger was constantly aroused by some one or other of the fair maidens, who—for young ladies have no compunction in disclosing their feelings on such occasions—were disgusted by the sneaking attentions, as they called them, which, in spite of the many rebuffs his homage to beauty provoked, he, nevertheless, persisted in forcing upon the best looking. He had often striven to obtain Sophy Brown's goodwill, but as yet had met with nought but scorn and repulse. As might be supposed, therefore, it was a matter of extreme amusement to Edith and I to hear of this amiable proposal from "Joe Smith" to constitute himself her gaoler.

"Unless you tied her hands together, she-

would assuredly push him into the water," cried Edith, in an ecstasy of amusement, and hardly able to speak for laughing.

"Upon my word, young ladies, I do not at all understand you," said the deeply incensed Mrs. Hall. "I see nothing to laugh at, if *you* do, in a girl going on in this unladylike way."

"Why did you not try to stop her, then, in the commencement of her—I say it with all respect, Mrs. Hall—unhappy career of folly and vanity!" Edith said, gently. "She is such a mere child, and notwithstanding her many and grievous faults of temper and character, is so affectionate and warm-hearted, that you might—oh, I am sure you might—with judicious management have done anything you wished to improve and reform her. As for shutting her up and giving her over to the care of that old hypocrite, who deludes no one—excuse me for saying so—but yourself by his deceptive manners, the thing would be impossible,—worse than impossible—it would be positive cruelty, if not a sin. It would be no use your attempting it, for I

am sure, knowing the state of her mind, the door would be broken open the next hour, and she would be liberated by any or all the passengers ; and you must allow it would not be very safe to encounter her afterwards. As for her wandering about the vessel last night for malicious motives, it is a pure invention, told you, I have no doubt, by some one who wished to increase your ill-opinion of her—most probably Mr. Hobson himself!"

" You are talking upon that of which you know nothing, Miss Grant," answered Mrs. Hall; her eyes gleaming, and her voice assuming that slow, calm, concentrated tone which always bespeaks a great internal struggle for self-control.

" That of which I know nothing !" repeated Edith, with increasing warmth ; " how could that be, Mrs. Hall ? Do you imagine anything concerning that poor child's wild ways, and your culpable neglect of her,—I cannot help so expressing myself, your neglect and expulsion of her,—is unknown to any person on board ? If you think so, believe me you were never more mistaken in your life !

Of course there is no disputing that she is, and always was, sadly deficient in right principles and want of proper propriety on all points."

"Oh, you admit that much," sarcastically, observed the angry lady.

"But," continued Edith, "when first she came amongst us, there was, I am certain, no more evil in her than there would be in any other girl brought up in the like lamentable manner; for her school was evidently of a very second-class character, its regulations defective in the extreme, and the companions she met there were, from her own showing, rude, bold, ill-regulated girls. What could be expected, therefore, after such bringing up, and that from the early age of four years old? Now do you not think, Mrs. Hall, that if in the beginning you, instead of making everything so unpleasant to her pleasure-loving mind, which it seems you did, and which was sure to drive her from you—if instead of keeping the wild, restless thing for hours doing yards of dull, plain needlework (I declare I would have thrown it out of the window), and

neither speaking yourself nor allowing her to do so, but inflicting long chapters upon the two unfortunate girls out of dull uninteresting books, unsuited to their age,—you had endeavoured to beguile the time with kind and cheerful conversation, mingling instruction with it if you liked, varied by light amusing reading, pleasant both to her and your daughter's tastes and age, you would in all probability by this time have made a rational, amiable being, of the girl—holding such advantages, too, as you did in the right of control over her, and of constant association with her? In place of all this, your treatment—and indeed, Mrs. Hall, you could not but have known it would do so—made her hate your presence, and, consequently, shun your cabin.

“Upon my word, young lady, your own uncontrolled temper, to say nothing of—of—” exclaimed the conscience-stricken guardian. “But I do not wish to be personal, or to enter into particulars: I will just observe, however, that the better acquainted I become with Miss Brown's friends on board

this vessel, and the more I hear their sentiments with regard to myself and others" (those others we knew meant Mr. Hobson alias "Joe Smith"),—"which sentiments are, without doubt, carefully instilled into that wicked child's mind,—the less I wonder at the way in which she behaves to me, or, indeed, at anything else she does!"

"Well, Mrs. Hall," said Edith, with grave good temper, "it is clear you do not value my opinion, nor choose to be influenced by it; but I sadly fear that the time is not far distant when you will regret your present conduct to that girl, who was trustfully confided to your care by her friends—regret it when repentance is too late."

What answer Mrs. Hall might have returned to these words of dear, impetuous Edith, I know not. Her face was suffused with an angry flush, that any one should be so presumptuous as to even think *her* in the wrong; and looking reluctantly up, for her hard eyes had sunk under the earnest gaze of Edith's, was on the point of speaking —how I did long for her to leave my cabin,

but not a bit of it ! there she sat, evidently intending to fight it out in her cold, sarcastic way to the last—when—. But first I must tell you, that during Edith's concluding words, peals of merriment resounded from the cuddy—an equal mingling of male and female voices. After a brief space, this was followed by little, hasty, pattering steps, along the passage—then came two or three small thumps at my door, so low down, they almost seemed on the floor, and a baby voice cried out between whiles,—

“ Pease ope de door ; me want tum in—
me want tum in.”

Edith's attention being pre-occupied at the moment, she did not notice the tiny request; whereupon Alice Hall, smiling good-humouredly, made a movement to rise, and do as the little petitioner asked, but was abruptly checked by her mother's hand keeping her down. I was on the point of speaking to Edith, when the thumps were renewed more loudly than before, and this time in an offended, indignant tone, the small voice reiterating loudly with every thump,—

"Pease, ope de door! Will you, pease,
ope de door?"

The moment the matter was understood, Mary Graham sprang up with alacrity, only too glad, I saw, of the interruption it brought to a contest which was, she feared, both injurious and unpleasant to me, and, opening the door, Jessy Evans staggered in.

Oh, what a queer little figure she presented, as, halting a second, she rolled her round mischievous eyes upon each of us. The whole of her broad, fat, rosy face—more than usually rosy—from the chin to the eyes, as also her plump hands, which she held rather from her, and wide open, were thickly covered with yellow butter; so thickly, as to prove at a glance that it could not be the result of accident, for even her very forehead shone with the unctuous substance. Having discovered the person she wanted, the wicked monkey suddenly made a rush across the cabin, and threw herself, head foremost, upon Mrs. Hall. Now this lady was on all occasions elaborately and handsomely dressed; she evidently delighted in that female grati-

fication of vanity ; and to-day happened to be more than usually resplendent, in an exceedingly rich, light green silk, into the folds of which on her lap, Jessy, screaming ecstatically, forthwith plunged her greasy face, and rubbed it about. The tiny thing had well learned her lesson ! for at the same moment she grasped each side of the dress with her besmeared hands, thereby insuring the certain destruction of at least three breadths of the silk !

A wild, loud, elfish laugh, coming from without the venetians, told too truly who was the principal instigator of the naughty trick, and delightedly watching the result through some crevice—the curtain being drawn back for coolness. I really think this laugh served to enrage Mrs. Hall much more even than the injury to her dress. Springing up, she shook off the clutch of the little Jessy as though it had been that of some poisonous reptile, and giving her a severe blow on the side of the head, swept past like a whirlwind, and with white face and furious eyes, cried in a shrill, fierce voice,—

“ Sophy! Sophy Brown! come here, madam! Come here, instantly! or you shall be hunted through the ship like a little imp, as you are!”

“ Don’t you wish you may catch me?” came back in derisive answer, accompanied with almost choking laughter, and also, to our great relief, by flying steps along the passage, which died away in the distance, as Sophy, with that matchless rapidity which would have baffled a far more active person than the enraged Mrs. Hall, darted up the stairs to the deck, pursued by the latter. I marvelled at the hardihood and powers of endurance of the baby Jessy. She made not the slightest attempt at crying; indeed, was so lost in wonder at the frightful explosion of the mine which her small match had fired, she did nothing but stare and listen, the whole of her round astonished face presenting in every feature a perfect representation of the letter O.

Edith and Mary instantly took her between them, and set to work to free her face, hands, and arms from the butter, for it would have

been cruel to every one on board to set the mischief-loving little creature at large again while still possessed of so dangerous a means of gratifying her frolicsome propensities.

Poor, gentle, timid Alice Hall bent down her face on her hands, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. I went and sat by and comforted her as much as I could, though hardly knowing very well what to say, for I did not quite understand the cause of her distress; and her mother being the principal character in the past unpleasant scene, and in my opinion on many points so much to blame, it was not easy for me so to word my soothing as to avoid any reflections upon her. However, we managed to understand each other, and she clung affectionately to me and was comforted, and soon checking her grief, she rose from the cushion, and gratefully kissing my cheek, said she would now go to her cabin, as no doubt her mother had by this time returned there.

In passing little Jessy, she good-naturedly stooped and kissed her, saying,—

"I hope you will not spoil any more dresses as you did poor mamma's."

"No, me 'ont spoil *ou dess*," answered the small thing; adding, in an injured tone, as the door closed upon Alice, "But me spoil dat uddy old lady's dess ebery time me tan, dat me will! *ou see!*"

"Do you care so little as all that for a box on the ear, Jessy?" asked Mrs. Graham.

"Me not tare," she replied, kicking about one of her fat little feet in a carelessly defiant manner.

"There, we have taken away your sting for to-day at any rate," said Edith, giving a finishing wipe to the plump red arm she had just washed; and now I will take you to the cuddly to your mamma, who, no doubt, is waiting somewhere about for you. But first, you little butter-firkin!—La! how capitally that name suits the small round thing!" ejaculated Edith, glancing gaily at me.

"What's a butter-fertin?" inquired the said small round thing, looking doubtful whether to be pleased or angry.

"A butter-firkin? Oh, why it is a little

tub like you, filled with butter and sent to distant places, as you are. But never mind that," she continued, laughing, "I want you to tell me the names of all the wicked people who buttered you up in such a barbarous manner. Sophy Brown was the head, of course; and who completed the body? Come, if you are a good child, I will give you this;" and Edith, seeing that this tiny piece of human nature looked half-affronted at the reflection cast upon her personal appearance, took a large piece of sugar-candy out of her pocket, at sight of which the aggrieved look disappeared, and forthwith she commenced,—

"Tophy Brown, Mit Miff, Taptin Beaufort, Fanny Adair, and Madjer Mambers. He put a big bit of butter on top my nose, but it tumby off." And here the little thing burst into a fit of such infectiously joyous laughter, that we all joined in heartily.

Just then open flew the door, and Sophy Brown, her hair tumbled and tossed, her cheeks crimson, and her dark eyes flashing and dancing with brightness, rushed in.

Banging the door after her, she locked it ; then, turning to us, screamed out between shrieks of wild laughter,—

“ Oh, was it not capital ? Oh, delicious ! And didn’t she do it well ? Oh, capital, wasn’t it ? Oh, I shall die with delight at the thought of it ! ”

And with a total self-abandonment that was really quite terrifying, the excited girl threw herself on the floor, rolling and exclaiming so violently, and with such malignant triumph, as resembled nought else but the conduct of a positive maniac. We could not feel any sympathy with such unnatural mirth, and remained silently watching until the fit had exhausted itself. Even little Jessy seemed to regard it as rather strange behaviour and out of the common course of events, opening her round eyes to an extent that would have surprised the most wide-awake owl that ever haunted an old church tower.

Seeing me beginning to look extremely uneasy, Edith went close to Sophy, and, catching her by the shoulder, endeavoured,

as she afterwards said, to shake the crazy thing into her senses, and at the same time angrily remonstrated with her.

"Sophy, don't make such a noise! Be quiet do, you little lunatic! All the ship's company will be coming to see what is the matter. Stop! will you, you little goose!" and, losing all patience, Edith shook the wild girl passionately. "Now will you be quiet?"

But in vain, nothing stopped her—she only laughed louder, and I was becoming more and more uneasy. Mary then spoke to her, and at last, to our relief, she did succeed in quieting her a little, and stopping the frantic merriment she was giving way to.

Still crying out, "Oh, what a rich scene it was! and, poor little Jessy, oh!" she sat up, and pushing back her hair, stared about her. As ill-luck would have it, the sight of all our grave, disconcerted faces—especially Jessy's, who looked all eyes, so great was the little thing's astonishment—was too much for her keen perception of the ludicrous,

and she once more threw herself on the floor, and rolled and shrieked with such an increase of violence that, scarcely knowing what I did, expecting every instant to see Sophy fall into a frightful fit, I flew to the door and opened it, hoping to find one of the cuddy servants, whom in my desperation I meant to despatch for Captain Henley. To my inexpressible joy, Jenny was standing close without, holding the can containing my daily allowance of fresh water—in quantity about a couple of quarts.

“She had knocked,” she said, “for some time,” but the confusion within quite prevented our hearing her. Perceiving at a glance the state of perturbation I was in, Jenny hurried past me into the cabin. The moment her eye fell on Sophy, she comprehended the emergency of the case, for the girl was literally working herself into a fit of madness, and without a moment’s hesitation threw the whole can of water over her upturned face and head, exclaiming vehemently, “This will stop you, I’ll be bound !”

And it did. Never was remedy more rapid or effectual. Her screams ceased at once, and bounding up from the floor, she cried out, in a totally altered tone, while rubbing the water from her eyes,—

“Jenny! you ill-natured thing! how dare you do that? What harm was I doing? You see, you horrid woman, if I don’t throw a whole *bucket-full* over you some day!”

“I don’t doubt you, you mischievous young monkey!” answered Jenny, handing her a towel; “come, wipe your face, Miss, and be quick, do; and then run down to your cabin and change your dress as fast as you can. If any one sees you in this dripping state, they will think you have been trying to drown yourself.”

These words wrought a strange change in Sophy. She ceased wiping her face and tangled hair, and said in a trembling voice, as she looked down upon her long wet tresses and dabbled gown,—

“Who will think so? Why should they think it? It would be false—you know it would, Jenny! You did it yourself, didn’t

you? It would be false if they thought I did it!"

"Yes, yes—very well, very well," replied my little woman, in a much softened tone, for the peculiar something in Sophy's expression and words struck her, angry though she was at the girl's mad conduct. "It would be wrong, of course, but people don't always stick to the right in things of that sort, nor indeed of any sort, for that matter; so run away, there's a good child;" and Jenny almost forced her out of the cabin, shutting and locking the door after her.

Edith then took the exceedingly subdued Jessy Evans back to her mother, and once more Mary and I were left in peace and quiet.

Very wrathful was Jenny at sight of my unfinished meal.

"I vow and declare," protested the little woman, "I will always for the future, whenever you are ill, Miss Kitty, and taking of your meals in your cabin, and Mrs. Graham is with you, I will—yes, that I will!—always lock your door and put the key in my pocket

every time I leave you. No one shall get in again, that I vow and declare!"

Mary smiled, saying,—

"Next time, you may depend upon it, I will lock the door myself, Mrs. Jenny."

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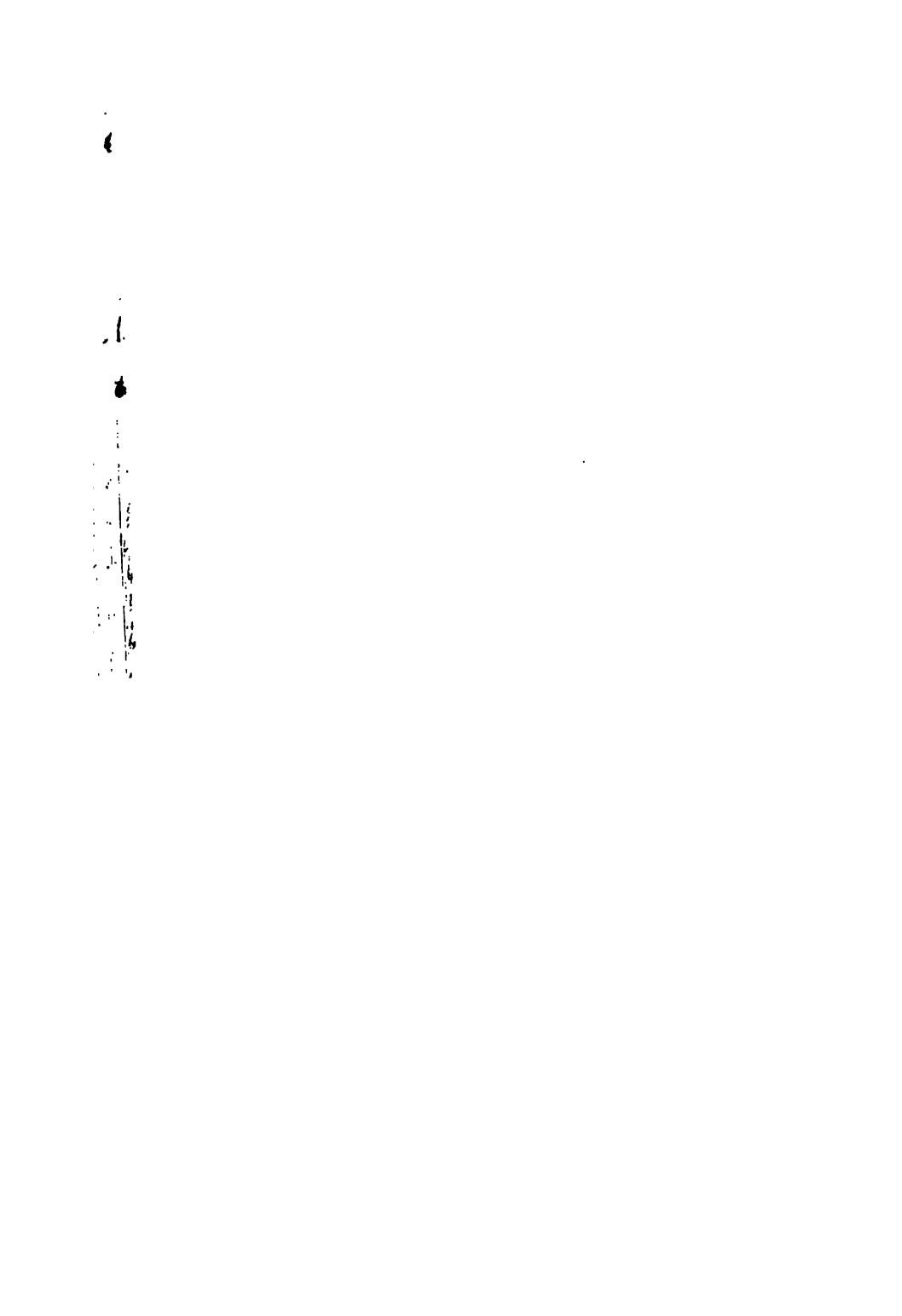
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Felt ourselves on tolerably safe ground when we ventured to predict an approaching revolution. Judging from the preface to this book, we may conjecture that it was partly on our hint that Mr. Tinsley has published. As all prophets must welcome events that tend to the speedy accomplishment of their predictions, we confess ourselves gratified by the promptitude with which Mr. Tinsley has acted, and we heartily wish his venture success. He recognises that a reformation so radical must be a work of time, and at first may possibly seem to defeat its object. For it is plain that the public must first be converted to a proper regard for its own interests ; and, by changing the borrowing for the buying system, must come in to bear the publisher out. He must look, moreover, to the support and imitation of his brethren of the trade. We doubt not he has made the venture after all due deliberation, and that we may rely on his determination seconding his enterprise. All prospectuses of new undertakings tend naturally to exaggeration, but success will be well worth the waiting for, should it be only the shadow of that on which Mr. Tinsley reckons. He gives some surprising figures ; he states some startling facts ; and, as a practical man, he draws some practical conclusions. He quotes a statement of Mr. Charles Reade's, to the effect that three publishers in the United States had disposed of no less than 370,000 copies of Mr. Reade's latest novel. He estimates that the profits on that sale—the book being published at a dollar—must amount to £25,000. Mr. Reade, of course, has a name, and we can conceive that his faults and blemishes may positively recommend themselves to American taste. But Mr. Tinsley remarks that if a publisher could sell 70,000 copies in any case, there would still be £5,000 of clear gain ; and, even if the new system had a much more moderate success than that, all parties would still profit amazingly. For Mr. Tinsley calculates the profits of a sale of 2,000 copies of a three-volume edition at £1,000, and we should fancy the experience of most authors would lead them to believe he overstates it. It will be seen that at all events the new speculation promises brilliantly, and reason and common sense conspire to tell us that the reward must come to him who has patience to wait. *Palmam qui meruit ferat*, and may he have his share of the profits too. Meanwhile, here we have the first volume of Mr. Tinsley's new series in most legible type, in portable form, and with a sufficiently attractive exterior. The price is four shillings, and, the customary trade deduction being made to circulating libraries, it leaves them without excuse should they deny it to the order of their customers.

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We should apologise to Miss Kettle for keeping her waiting while we discuss business matters with her publisher. But she knows, no doubt that there are times when business must take precedence of pleasure, and conscientious readers are bound to dispose of the preface before proceeding to the book. For we may say at once that we have found pleasure in reading her story. In the first place, it has a strong and natural local colouring, and we always like anything that gives a book individuality. In the next, there is a feminine grace about her pictures of nature and delineations of female character, and that always makes a story attractive. Finally, there is a certain interest that carries us along, although the story is loosely put together, and the demands on our credulity are somewhat incessant and importunate. The scene is laid in the West Riding of Yorkshire; nor did it need the dedication of the book to tell us that the author was an old resident in the county. With considerable artistic subtlety she lays her scenes in the very confines of busy life. Cockneys and professional foreign tourists are much in the way of believing that the manufacturing districts are severed from the genuinely rural ones by a hard-and-fast line; that the demons of cotton, coal, and wool blight everything within the scope of their baleful influence. There can be no greater blunder; native intelligence might tell us that mills naturally follow water power, and that a broad stream and a good fall generally imply wooded banks and sequestered ravines, swirling pools, and rushing rapids. Miss Kettle, as a dweller in the populous and flourishing West Riding, has learned all that of course. She is aware besides of the power of contrast; that peace and solitude are never so much appreciated as when you have just quitted the bustle of life, and hear its hum mellowed by the distance. Romance is never so romantic as when it rubs shoulders with the practical, and sensation "piles itself up" when it is evolved in the centre of commonplace life.

Although, however, the story unquestionably often loses in interest by the very efforts made to excite it, still it is interesting, and very pleasantly written, and for the sake of both author and publisher we cordially wish it the reception it deserves.

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